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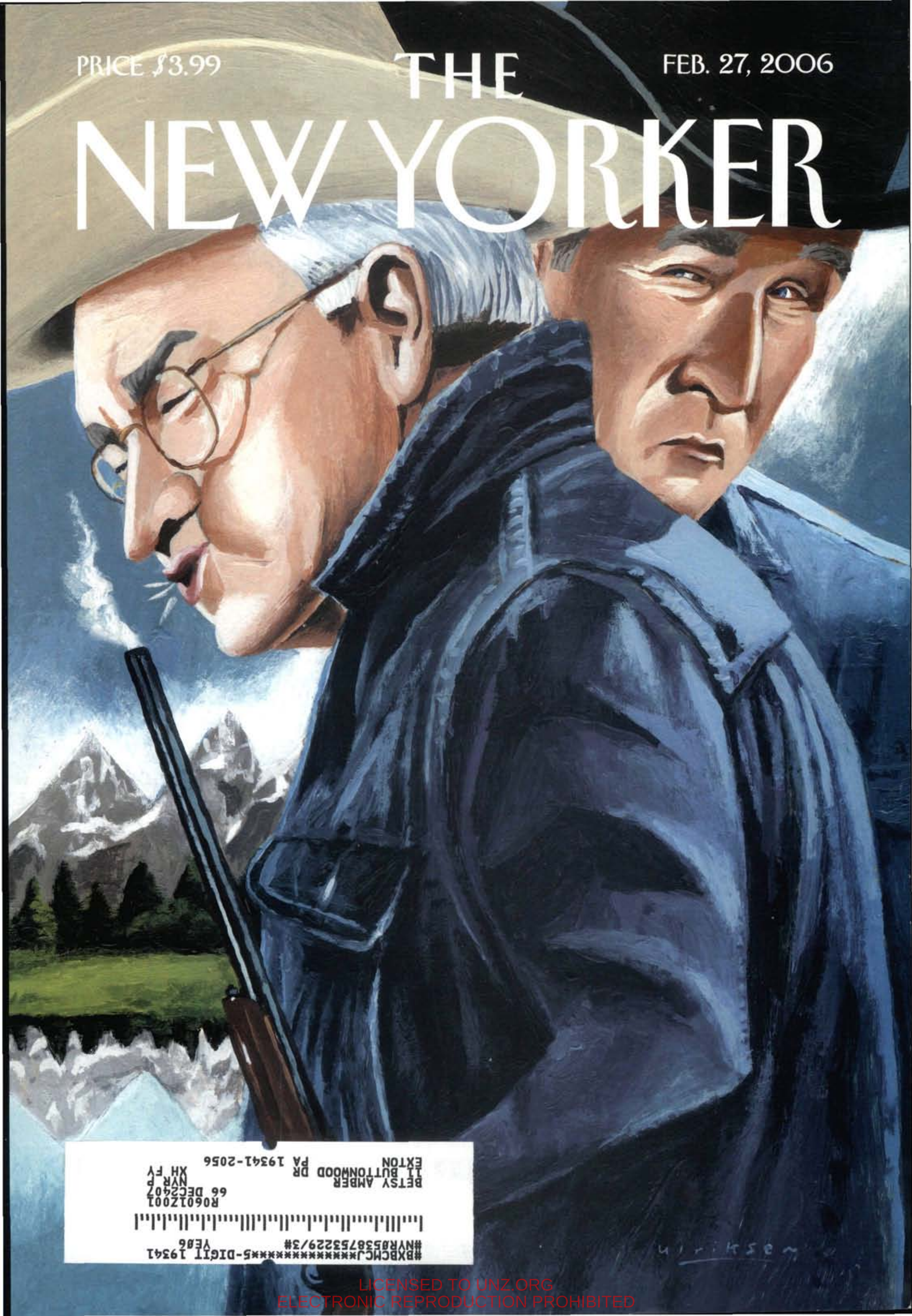
THE NEW YORKER



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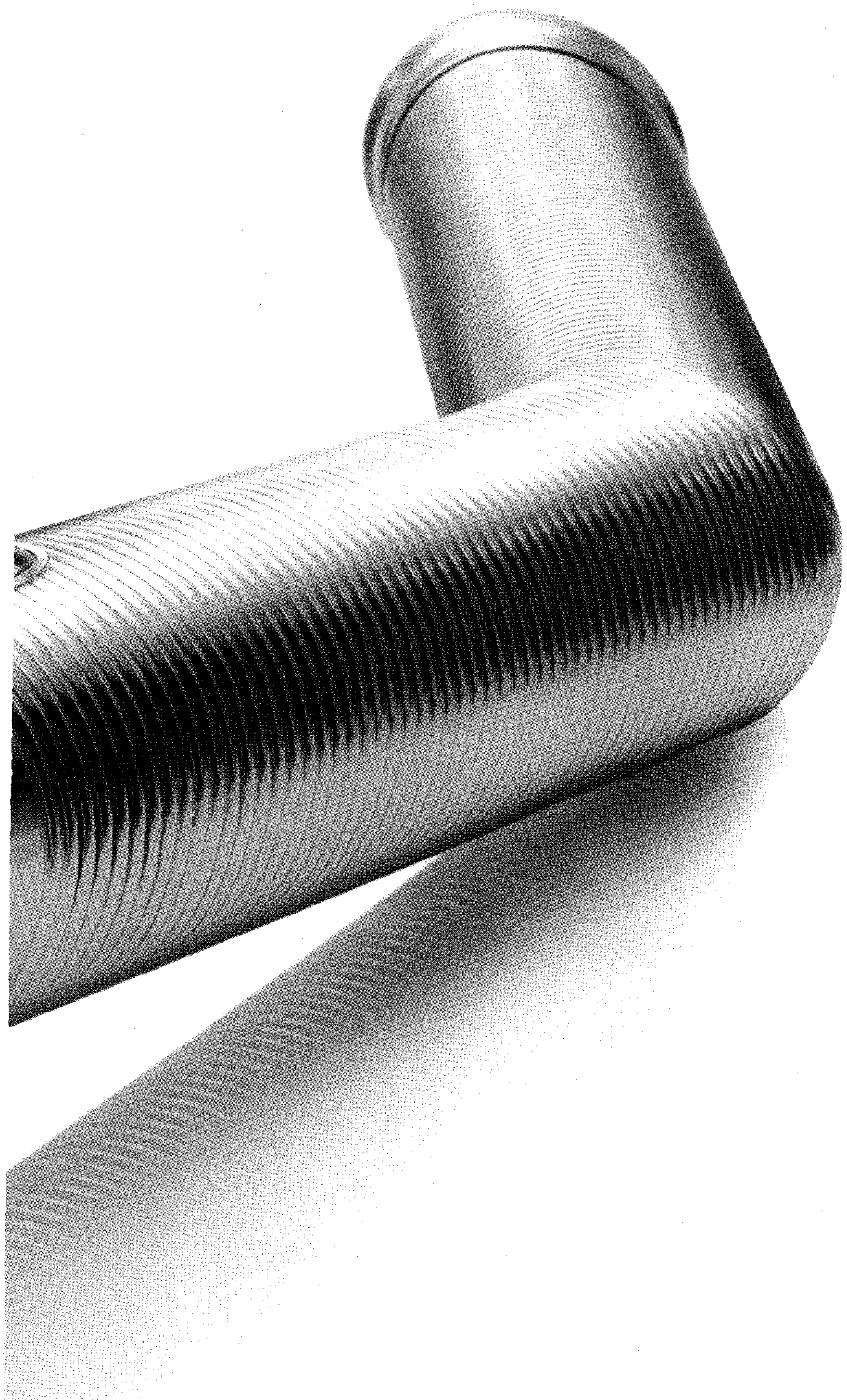

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David Remnick talks about Hamas and democracy.

Primary Source:
A Department of Defense memo detailing the Navy's role in the development of interrogation rules.

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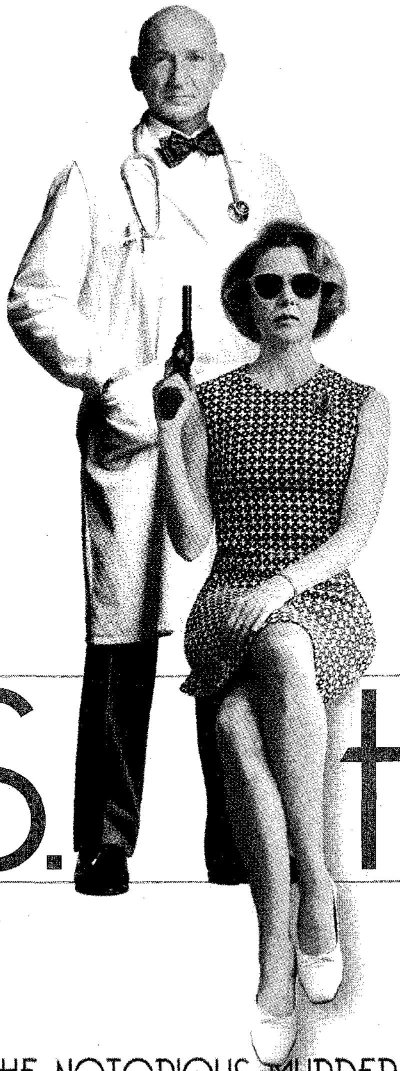
SO SHE SHOT HIM.



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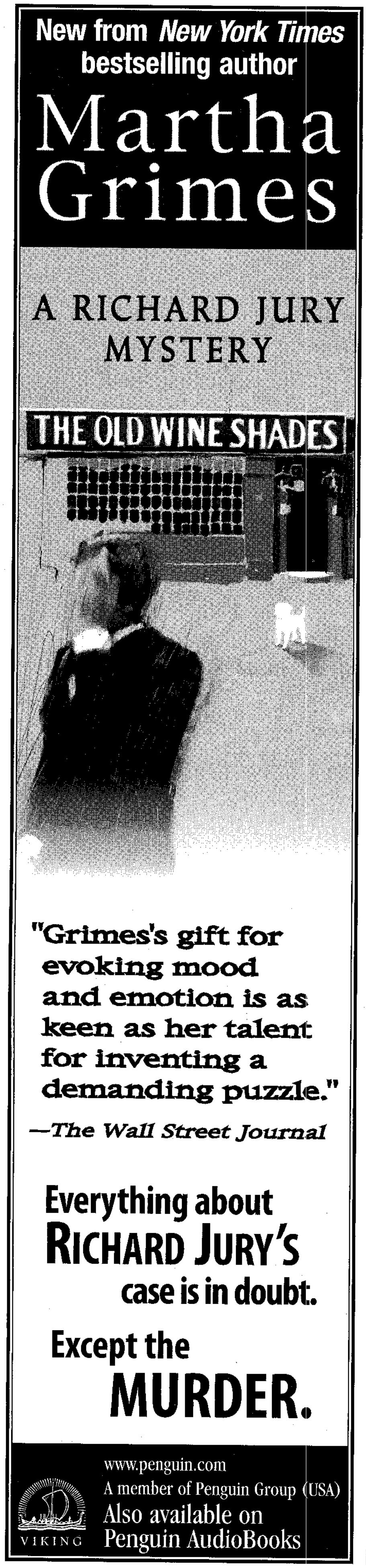
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CONTRIBUTORS

Jane Mayer ("The Memo," p. 32) is a staff writer based in Washington, D.C.

David Sedaris ("Suitable for Framing," p. 42) has published several books of essays, including "Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim."

Jane Kramer (Comment, p. 25) writes often about issues of immigration and assimilation in Europe.

Linda Gregg (Poem, p. 68) is the author of eight poetry collections, including "In the Middle Distance," to be published next month.

Mark Ulriksen (Cover) has a second illustrated children's book, "The Biggest Parade," with words by Elizabeth Winthrop, coming out in July.

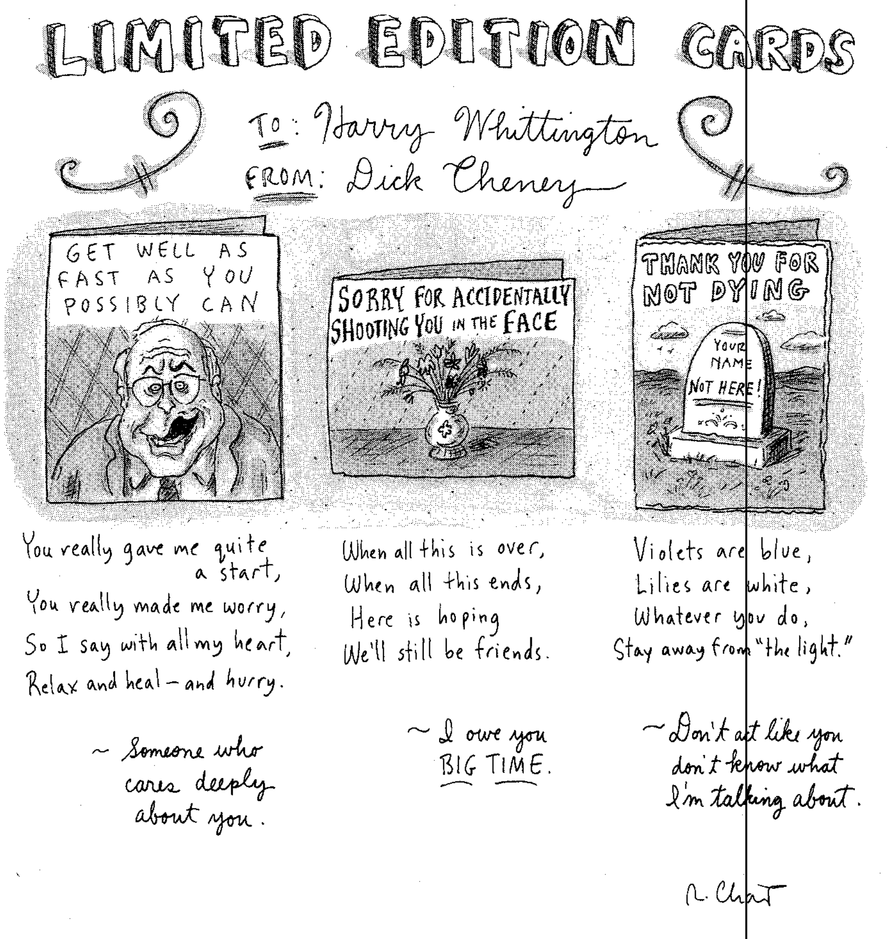
Elizabeth Kolbert ("Watermark," p. 46) is the author of "Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change," which comes out next month.

John Updike (Fiction, p. 70) will publish his twenty-second novel, "Terrorist," in June.

Paul Goldberger (The Sky Line, p. 86) is the magazine's architecture critic.

John Lanchester (Books, p. 78) has a new book, "Family Romance," a memoir, coming out next year.

John Lahr (The Theatre, p. 88) is the senior theatre critic for the magazine. His book "Honky Tonk Parade: *New Yorker* Profiles of Show People" was published in October. ♦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Violets are blue, / Lilies are white, / Whatever you do, / Stay away from "the light."
~ Someone who cares deeply about you.
~ I owe you BIG TIME.
~ Don't act like you don't know what I'm talking about.
R. Chast

THE MAIL

PROTECTING PRIVILEGE

Jeffrey Toobin, in his excellent report on judicial and prosecutorial threats to reporters' privilege, accurately quotes the least substantiated line in federal appellate judge Richard Posner's decision against my colleagues and me in McKevitt v. Pallasch: "The [book] they are planning to write will be less marketable the more information in it that has already been made public" ("Name That Source," January 16th). But neither side argued that my colleagues and I had any economic motive for making our First Amendment stand against turning over our notes and tapes of interviews with David Rupert about his infiltration of the I.R.A. Our only motivation was to defend the principle that a journalist should be able to let a source talk freely without fear that the tape might be subpoenaed.
Abdon M. Pallasch
Legal-Affairs Reporter
Chicago Sun-Times
Chicago, Ill.

MURROW AND THE NEWS

Had Edward R. Murrow lived past 1965, it is easy to imagine his becoming a left-wing scold, as happened with Bill Moyers and Daniel Schorr ("The Murrow Doctrine," by Nicholas Lemann, January 23rd & 30th). I don't know any modern-day conservative who believes that, as Lemann writes, "Dan Rather represents the introduction of a heretofore unknown ideological strain into broadcast journalism." Instead, Rather et al. represent a logical progression from Murrow's consummate ability to mix hard news with editorial comment without acknowledging his own bias. Murrow may have provided early broadcast journalism with some of its most electrifying moments, but he also laid the groundwork for millions of viewers to feel a deep distrust of newscasters.
Robert Holladay
Tallahassee, Fla.

As Lemann observes, Murrow may have been a bold broadcast journalist "because a federal regulatory agency had pushed CBS and other broadcasters to organize themselves so that Murrow's doing so was possible." But according to Murrow's producer, Fred Friendly, after the four "See It Now" broadcasts dealing with Senator Joseph McCarthy various CBS affiliates called the network's president, Frank Stanton, to tell him that "they might lose their licenses because of it." Soon afterward, CBS stripped "See It Now" of its status as an independent company unit and changed its operating practices and coverage. Two decades later, Friendly produced a groundbreaking study that detailed how both the Johnson and Nixon Administrations had used the threat of license revocations due to Fairness Doctrine violations to silence their critics.
Stuart N. Brotman
Past President and C.E.O., Museum of Television & Radio
Lexington, Mass.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

I was pleased to see Jeffrey Frank's article on the Norwegian novelist and 1920 Nobel laureate Knut Hamsun, although I would have liked to see more emphasis placed on Hamsun's achievement as a novelist instead of on his idiosyncratic, and fateful, political ideas (A Critic at Large, December 26th & January 2nd). Also, since the article dealt largely with translated texts, I would expect the translators to be identified, considering their vital role in making foreign literature available. Frank refers to, and quotes from, seven of Hamsun's books, six of which I translated into English.
Sverre Lyngstad
Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English, New Jersey Institute of Technology
New York City

•

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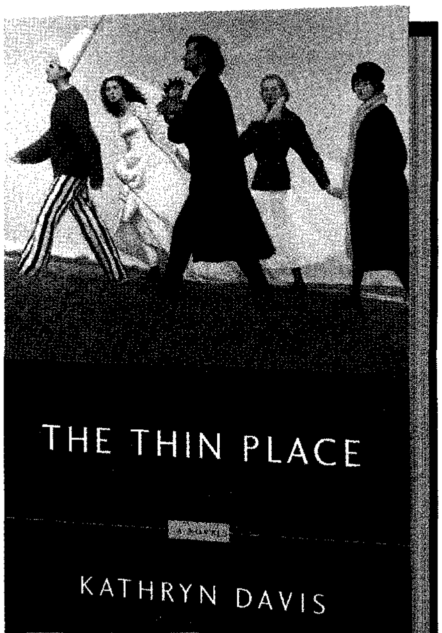

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The work of Andy Warhol, at Dia: Beacon, upstate. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
SONTAG REDUX

A little-known play by the late Susan Sontag gets its world première at P.S. 122. In "A Parsifal," based on Wagner's opera about a knight's quest for the Holy Grail, Sontag reimagines the knight as a gun-toting soldier in a forest of violence and sex. John Jahnke directs. (See page 8.)

NIGHT LIFE
SENSITIVE MAN

The understated pop vocalist Duncan Sheik first appeared on the scene nearly ten years ago with the hit single "Barely Breathing" and went on to record a series of stately, sometimes sparse records, including "Phantom Moon." Sheik brings songs from his new album, "White Limousine," to the Allen Room for an "American Songbook" show. (See page 10.)

ART
WRONG ACTION

As an amuse-bouche before the feast of the Biennial, the Whitney presents "Down by Law," a small, tight show of work that deals with the consequences of bad behavior and illegal actions. The show was assembled by the Wrong Gallery—Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni, and Ali Subotnick's shoebox-sized enterprise in Chelsea—and includes work by fifty-four artists. (See page 13.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
BOROUGH SOUNDS

The Brooklyn Philharmonic, financially stressed for years, begins a new era of hopeful stability under its promising young music director, Michael Christie. He leads the group in performances of Glass's "Hymn to Aten" and Orff's "Carmina Burana." (See page 18.)

MOVIES
MILK AND HONEY

The twenty-first Israel Film Festival will present more than forty new films, including "Distortion," by Haim Bouzaglo, about a blocked writer traumatized by a suicide bombing, "Now or Never," a docudrama by Eitan Londner about David Ben-Gurion and the founding of Israel, and "In Joseph's Tomb," a documentary about ten soldiers left to fend for themselves during riots in Hebron. (See page 20.)

Dear Ketel One Drinker

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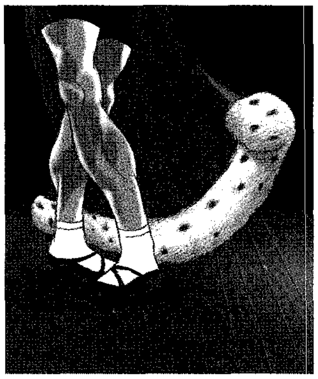
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
KINGS' WAY

Thanks, presumably, to the Three Tenors, we're getting "Kings of the Dance" this week at City Center. Like the tenors, the stars of this show really are stars: the warm, refined Angel Corella (American Ballet Theatre); the tough-guy virtuoso Ethan Stiefel (A.B.T.); the big, endlessly stageworthy Nikolay Tsiskaridze (Bolshoi); and the ebullient and precise Johan Kobborg (Royal Ballet). But bring a tranquillizer, because they're going to shoot a lot of dances at us. First comes a new piece, to Schubert, by Christopher Wheeldon, for all four men. Then, we'll see a behind-the-scenes film of them rehearsing various chestnuts from the classical repertory and talking. Next comes Flemming Flindt's 1963 bloody-toe-shoes ballet, "The Lesson," in which the ballet teacher (the kings will alternate in this role) actually murders his student. Finally, each man will dance a new solo created expressly for him. In a show like this, though, the choreography is almost beside the point. The audience will be there to see these famous dancers and will howl with joy no matter what they do.

—*Joan Acocella*



TOMER HANUKA

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

BERNARDA ALBA
Phylicia Rashad stars in a new musical by Michael John LaChiusa, in which the strong will of a recent widow is subverted by her rebellious daughters. Choreographed and directed by Graciela Daniele. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

DEFIANCE
Manhattan Theatre Club presents John Patrick Shanley's new play, about racial tension on a North Carolina military base. Directed by Doug Hughes. In previews. Opens Feb. 28. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

ENTERTAINING MR. SLOANE
Alec Baldwin stars in a revival of Joe Orton's play, in which a saucy landlady and her brother fall for the same man. Directed by Scott Ellis. In previews. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

FAMILY SECRETS
Bob Balaban directs this one-woman show written and performed by Sherry Glaser, about a Jewish family from the Bronx that has relocated to California. In previews. (37 Arts, 450 W. 37th St. 212-307-4100.)

GREY GARDENS
The cult film by the Maysles brothers about two Bouvier women living in a dilapidated Hamptons manse has been adapted into a musical, starring Christine Ebersole and Mary Louise Wilson. Directed by Michael Greif. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE LIEUTENANT OF INISHMORE
An Atlantic Theatre Company presentation of a black comedy by Martin McDonagh ("The Pillowman"), about a secluded terrorist in Galway who discovers that his cherished cat has been killed. In previews. Opens Feb. 27. (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

MEASURE FOR MEASURE
The Pearl presents Shakespeare's dark comedy, directed by Beatrice Terry. Previews begin Feb. 23. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

MEASURE FOR PLEASURE
A new comedy by David Grimm, about a transvestite prostitute, at the Public. In previews. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

THE MUSIC TEACHER
The New Group presents a new play by Wallace Shawn, about a young teacher who creates an opera with his protégée. In previews. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 212-307-4100.)

THE PAJAMA GAME
Harry Connick, Jr., makes his Broadway début in a Roundabout Theatre Company revival of the 1954 musical. In previews. Opens Feb. 23. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

A PARSIFAL
The world première of Susan Sontag's gritty retelling of the Wagner opera. John Jahnke directs. Opens Feb. 23. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. 212-352-3101.)

RING OF FIRE, THE JOHNNY CASH MUSICAL SHOW
The stories of the songs of Johnny Cash are portrayed in a new musical directed by Richard Maltby, Jr. In previews. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

SIDD
A new musical inspired by "Siddhartha," the Herman Hesse classic about a man's wanderings toward enlightenment. Previews begin Feb. 23. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

SOLDIER'S WIFE
The Mint Theatre Company presents Rose Franken's romantic comedy set during the Second World War, about a soldier returning home from the South Pacific to his newly self-sufficient wife. In previews. Opens Feb. 23. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

[TITLE OF SHOW]
Jeff Bowen and Hunter Bell star in a musical they wrote about the writing of the musical. In previews. Opens Feb. 26. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

TRANSATLANTIC LIAISON
Simone de Beauvoir's affair with Nelson Algren is the subject of this new play by Fabrice Rozié. Directed by John McLean. In previews. (Harold Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

NOW PLAYING

ACTS OF MERCY: PASSION-PLAY
The world première of a new play by Michael John Garcés, about two sons seeking reconciliation with their dying father. Directed by Gia Forakis. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL
Among Shakespeare's problem plays, this tale of Helena, a brave, resourceful woman humiliated by the man she loves, was rarely performed until the twentieth century, perhaps because of its challenging and bitter subtext. Darko Tresnjak's production has a black gleam of opulence about it, but one feels very little for this Helena (a miscast Kate Forbes). Though there are some memorable performers among the elder roles (notably, Laurie Kennedy as the Countess of Rossillion and George Morfogen as the King of France), the totality here adds up to less than the sum of its parts. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

ALL THE BAD THINGS
A developmental production for LAByrinth Theatre, written by Cusi Cram, about a married woman living with her husband and her mother in a minuscule West Village apartment. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

BACK OF THE THROAT
To see Yussef El Guindi's brilliant and sinewy new play, you have to descend twice: first into the basement of the Flea Theatre, and then into the bosom of an intelligence community whose self-restraint has been eroded by post-9/11 paranoia and the Patriot Act. Two government agents search through the belongings of an incredulous Khaled (the convincing Adeel Akhtar), a struggling writer who reminds one of an Arab-American cousin of the young Woody Allen. At first the agents are all daft politeness, but the mock bonhomie soon gives way to a web of allegations. Khaled's resistance is that of a sane man caught up in Orwellian madness, a sense that's heightened by the effective work of the director, Jim Simpson. (41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

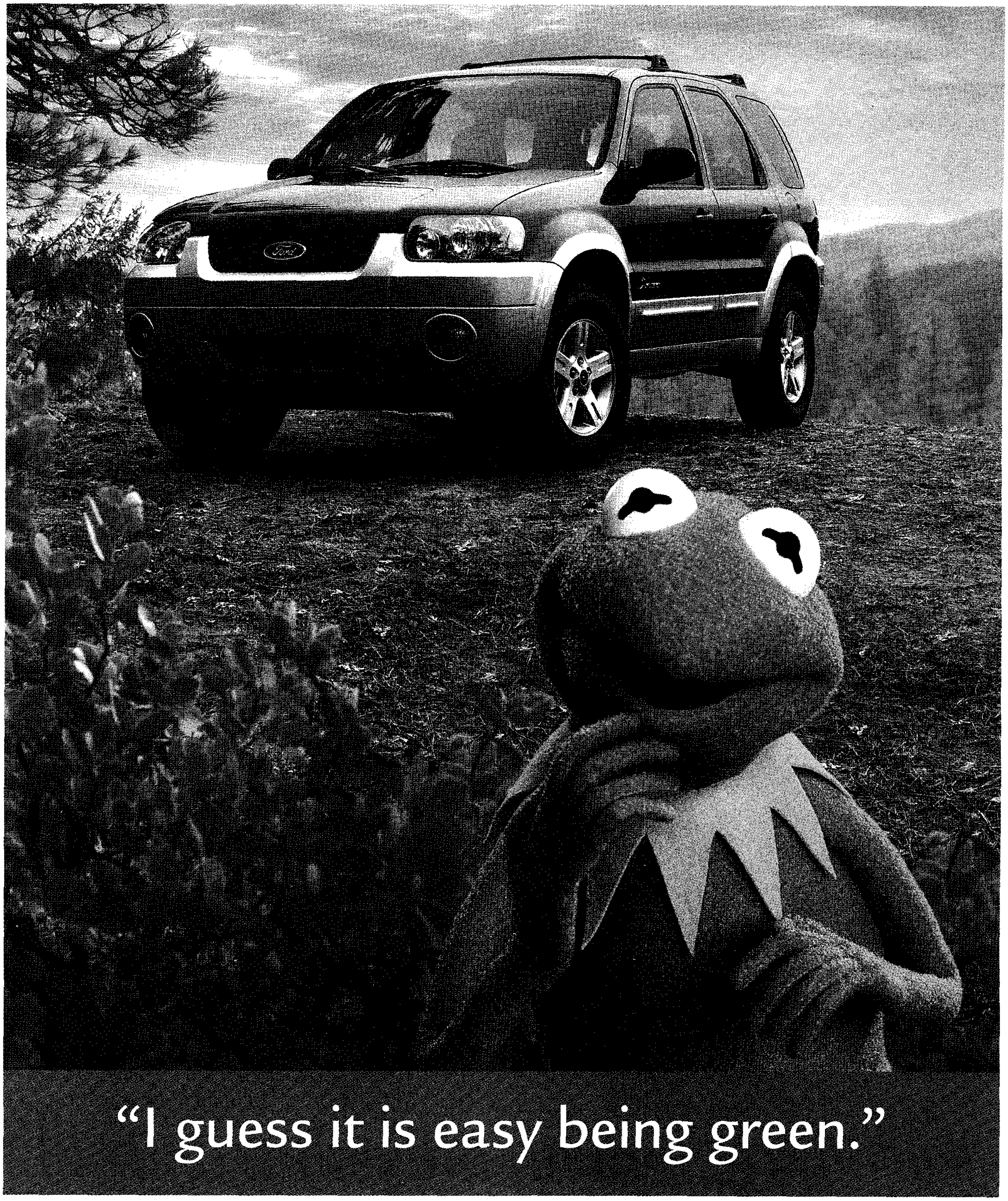
BAREFOOT IN THE PARK
A revival of Neil Simon's romantic comedy from 1963. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

CLEAN ALTERNATIVES
An eco-friendly family does battle with corporate big business, in a comedy by Brian Dykstra. Directed by Margarett Perry. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

CONFESSIONS OF A MORMON BOY
"My mercenary pioneer work ethic came in handy," Steven Fales tells us coyly in his autobiographical tell-all, reprised from the 2004 Fringe Festival. The skill set in question arose from Fales's transformation from a closeted Mormon dad to an excommunicated, drug-abusing gay hustler—and from the sound of it, the move was a lateral one. Such an exercise in self-exposure requires the jagged intrusions of genuine vulnerability. But despite his life of painful vicissitudes, Fales mugs through his anguished tale with the plucky pertness of a bicep-baring Shirley Temple. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 212-691-1555.)

DECEMBER FOOLS
The world première of a drama by Sherman Yellen, about the daughter of a famous Broadway composer who unearths family secrets. Directed by Donald Brenner. (Abingdon Theatre Arts, 312 W. 36th St. 212-868-4444. Through Feb. 26.)

FANNY HILL
A new musical by Ed Dixon, based on the novel by John Cleland, about a young girl with big dreams in eighteenth-century London. (St. Peter's Theatre, 54th St. east of Lexington Ave. 212-868-4444.)



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HEDDATRON
Les Freres Corbusier presents a half-actor-half-robot sendup of Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler." (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-868-4444. Through Feb. 25.)

I LOVE YOU BECAUSE
A young greeting-card writer discovers his girlfriend's infidelity and ventures back into the world of dating in New York. (Village, 158 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

INDOOR/OUTDOOR
A romantic comedy by Kenny Finkle, from the perspective of a spoiled cat. (DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

JUMP/CUT
The Women's Project presents the New York première of a play by Neena Beeber, a dark comedy about a trio of documentary filmmakers. Directed by Leigh Silverman. (Julia Miles, 424 W. 55th St. 212-239-6200. Through Feb. 26.)

LENNY BRUCE . . . IN HIS OWN WORDS
A portrait of the iconoclast comic, written and directed by Joan Worth and Alan Sacks. (Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-239-6200. Through Feb. 25.)

THE MAG-7
Naked Angels and the Flea Theatre present seven one-act plays by new playwrights. (41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

PORTRAITS—A FESTIVAL OF ONE-WOMAN SHOWS
Femme Fatale presents Victoria Roberts, a cartoonist for this magazine, in "Nona"; Denise Pelley in "Jazzabel"; and Molly Peacock in "The Shimmering Verge." (Urban Stages, 259 W. 30th St. 212-868-4444. Through Feb. 26.)

RABBIT HOLE
Every man—and woman—is an island in David Lindsay-Abaire's carefully constructed domestic play about the secretive workings of grief. Tragedy drives a wedge between Becca (Cynthia Nixon, in a brittle performance) and her husband, Howie (the fine John Slattery). Becca still bakes elaborate cakes and revels in her own efficiency, but the couple's four-year-old son has died in a car accident, leaving her feeling purposeless. Stuck together in a handsome Larchmont house that spins around onstage (the work of designer John Lee Beatty), this husband and wife are deeply uncomfortable with their shared memories and divergent ways of mourning. The impositions of Becca's garrulous mother (Tyne Daly) and sister (Mary Catherine Garrison) only increase the tensions. Skillfully directed by Daniel Sullivan, "Rabbit Hole" insinuates that we are always aliens within our own lives, awaiting the disaster that will crack open the pretense of our intimacies. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

RED LIGHT WINTER
The New York première of a new play by Adam Rapp. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200.)

RETZACH
A translation of Hanoch Levin's play, about the cycle of violence that unfolds when a father finds that his young son has been killed by soldiers in an occupied land. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE RIGHT KIND OF PEOPLE
Primary Stages presents the New York première of a new play by the actor Charles Grodin, a satire about a Fifth Avenue co-op board. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE SEVEN
A new hip-hop musical by Will Power ("Flow"), an adaptation of Aeschylus' "Seven Against Thebes." Directed by Jo Bonney, with choreography by Bill T. Jones. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE WOODEN BREEKS
MCC Theatre presents a new play by Glen Berger, set in the mythic village of Brood, about a poet who tries to cure heartache. Directed by Trip Cullman. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

Also Playing

ABIGAIL'S PARTY: Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **BRIDGE & TUNNEL:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **THE COLOR PURPLE:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200. **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DOUBT:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED:** Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422. Through Feb. 26. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **RFK:** The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100. Through Feb. 26. **SWEENEY TODD:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL:** Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. between Broadway and Eighth Ave. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100. **ZOMBOID! (FILM/PERFORMANCE PROJECT #1):** St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-352-3101.

Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti, at the Knitting Factory.

JOHN RITTER

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

"AMERICAN SONGBOOK"
Feb. 22: **Duncan Sheik** seems to have a lot on his mind these days. His new album, "White Limousine," addresses the dangers of consumerism, among other heady ideas, and enlists the London Session Orchestra. But Sheik has made this project even more complex—his CD comes with a second disk of software to remix the songs. On tour, he's accompanied by a modest backing band (no strings, no remixing) that'll only add to the power of his performance. Feb. 25: The young singer-songwriter and actress **Nellie McKay** had a difficult relationship with her record label, Columbia, which dropped her just prior to the release of her sophomore album, "Pretty Little Head." But McKay is a willfully independent artist (she's about to appear on Broadway in the new version of "The Threepenny Opera") who performs a unique mix of cabaret and pop. Expect her to be in her element here. (Allen Room, Rose Theatre. Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500.)

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Feb. 25: **Hubert Sumlin,** the seventy-four-year-old blues guitarist who was long the backbone of Howlin' Wolf's band, gets a little help from **David Johansen** and **Levon Helm.** Later on Feb. 25: London's **Meat Beat Manifesto** combines the dissonant assault of industrial music with the relentless beat of techno and the sonic pastiche of hip-hop. The amorphous project is the work of the group's founder and producer, Jack Dangers, who, in recent years, has steered M.B.M. away from industrial dance music and into the realm of avant-garde jazz, though the end results are no less propulsive. Feb. 27: **Rakim,** the vocal half of the revered, old-school hip-hop duo Eric B. & Rakim. Feb. 28: A Fat Tuesday celebration with **George Clinton** and the P-Funk All Stars.

THE DELANCEY
168 Delancey St. (212-254-9920)—Mondays this month: The **Czars,** which is the baritone singer and piano player John Grant. The Denver-based performer puts a shine on melancholy with his carefully crafted pop songs.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Feb. 24: Yet another histrionic band of screaming, disenfranchised youths in black T-shirts, **Silverstein** (an odd name for a punk band, to be sure) puts its own stamp on emo-punk with tersely intricate arrangements, restraint, and subtlety.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Feb. 24: **Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti.** Ariel Pink (né Ariel Rosenberg) is an impoverished multitracking recording artist from Los Angeles who crafts left-of-center pop pastiches. He plays nearly all the instruments (creating the drum and percussion sounds with his mouth), and his lo-fi songs sound like radio transmissions from some undiscovered part of the universe. For this tour he's performing half the set solo and the other half with local musicians. With the droning guitars of the **Psychic Ills.**

SIN-É
150 Attorney St. (212-388-0077)—Feb. 25: A Mardi Gras party to benefit New Orleans musicians, featuring a number of local acts, including **Dead Blonde Girlfriend,** an energetic and smart band fronted by the anti-folk survivor Joie Blaney, the **Domestics,** a Brooklyn pop-punk outfit led by Alina Moscovitz, and the **Motel Creeps,** a pasty-faced but stylish quartet with an interest in the sounds of Echo & the Bunnymen. A few out-of-town guests, including former members of the Afghan Whigs, are also expected.

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—Johnny Cash would have turned seventy-four on Feb. 26, and the Kings County country singer Alex Battles has organized a party. He'll be there, with his honky-tonk band, **Whisky Rebellion,** along with the **Lonesome Prairie Dogs,** a group of self-described rockin' hillbillies from Jersey City, and the **Blue State Band.**

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—Feb. 24: The **Bush Tetras,** who've been playing edgy, New York-based punk for more than a quarter century, return to their native Lower East Side for a rare show. Made up of three women and one man, the Tetras play a nervy mixture of funk and garage rock driven by the guitarist Pat Place's jagged, dissonant style and the drummer Dee Pop's frenetic beats. The band's first single, "Too Many Creeps," made the *Billboard* dance charts in 1980, and the Tetras were forever associated with

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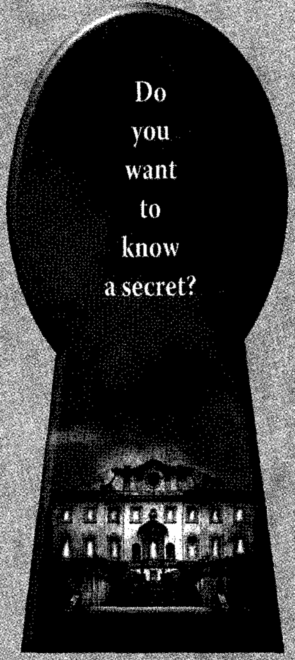

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the early-eighties downtown art scene (another single was featured in the movie "Basquiat"). After breaking up in the mid-eighties, the group re-formed in 1995, and its music is, if anything, even more relevant. After all, who better to listen to in these times of skyrocketing gas prices, Middle East violence, and a climate of general American decline than a band that formed in 1979? With **Int'l Shades.**

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Feb. 25: The Canadian ensemble **Stars** makes sophisticated indie pop rife with lush string arrangements, allusions to classic soul, and a lyrical maturity that delves into complicated emotional themes.

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
Feb. 23: The New York-based chamber-punk ensemble **Anti-Social Music.** (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St.) Feb. 24: A pre-St. Patrick's Day double bill with the traditional Celtic band **Flook** and the singer **Karan Casey,** formerly of Solas. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St.) Feb. 25: The Latin-American vocal star **Tania Libertad.** (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. For more information about all shows, call 212-545-7536.)

"Untitled (Dresses), 1998," by Alexey Titarenko, from a joint show on view at the Nailya Alexander and Candace Dwan gallery.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through Feb. 25: **Maude Maggart,** the sister of the pop star Fiona Apple, is carving out her own niche as a sultry and sweet-voiced cabaret artist.

BARBÈS
376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—The composer and bassist **Todd Sickafoose** studied in L.A. with the legendary free-jazz pioneer Charlie Haden, so it's no surprise that he knows how to ride the wave between composition and improvisation. Sickafoose, a stage partner and secret weapon of Ani DiFranco, celebrates the release of his new CD, "Blood Orange," on Feb. 28. His deconstructionist band features **Alan Ferber** on trombone, **John Ellis** on saxophone, **Adam Levy** (of Norah Jones's band) on guitar, and **Ches Smith** (of Marc Ribot's trio Ceramic Dog) on drums.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Feb. 22-25: The tenor saxophonist **Javon Jackson** addresses the enduring influence of Dexter Gordon by focussing on the legendary saxophonist's sly originals and the standards he made his own.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and, through Feb. 25: **Ute Lemper.** Her new show includes material by her beloved Kurt Weill and other Weimar-era artists, as well as such unexpected fare as a medley of Yiddish poems. She delivers it all with her signature blend of theatricality and sensuality.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—The well-crafted tunes of the pianist Cedar Walton, including "Bolivar" and "Mosaic," are cornerstones of the contemporary-jazz repertoire. The pianist **Eric Reed,** the vibist **Stefon Harris,** the trombonist **Wycliffe Gordon,** and the trumpeter **Terell Stafford** bring Walton's offerings to life Feb. 21-26.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Feb. 23-26: **Carmen Lundy,** a beguiling vocalist who deserves wider recognition, has a new live recording, "Jazz and the New Songbook." The ambitious double album consists solely of her original songs. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
Broadway at 60th St. (212-721-6500)—Saluting the Belle Époque of jazz in Los Angeles, when Central Avenue jumped to the sounds of swing and bop, the **Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra** is joined by the prestigious arranger **Gerald Wilson** (Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Count Basie) and **Plas Johnson,** a booting saxophonist best known for his later work on Henry Mancini's theme for the Pink Panther films. (Rose Theatre. Feb. 23-25.)

THE STONE
Avenue C at 2nd St. (No phone)—Feb. 22: At a midnight concert in Kraków's Kupa Synagogue as part of last summer's annual Festival of Jewish Culture, the pianist **Anthony Coleman** performed songs by the Polish Jewish songwriter and poet Mordechai Gebirtig (1877-1942). The Yiddish folk bard lived (and earned his keep as a carpenter) in Kraków, and he drew much of his inspiration from the city (he was also killed there by the Nazis, during an *Aktion* in the ghetto). His piece "S'brent," which was written in response to a 1936 pogrom and became an anthem for the Jewish resistance movement during the war, resonated powerfully in Coleman's hands. The show was recorded, and it can be found on "Shmutsige Magnaten (Dirty Magnates): Coleman Plays Gebirtig," the new Tzadik album that is being celebrated tonight. (For more information, visit www.thestonenyc.com.)

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Feb. 21-26: The trumpeter **Jeremy Pelt** has drawn plenty of notice for his high-stepping lyricism, playing with Roy Hargrove's big band and with Louis Hayes. His quintet here includes **Frank LoCastro,** on piano, and **Eric McPherson,** on drums. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Robert Rauschenberg: Combines."** A majestic, exhilarating show of painting-sculpture hybrids dating from the fifties and early sixties. Through April 2. ♦ The small but notable exhibition **"Antonello da Messina: Sicily's Renaissance Master"** includes his "Virgin Annunciate," which is, by itself, worth a trip to the museum. Depicted in the seconds before the angel Gabriel comes into view, Mary (here a young Sicilian girl in a blue mantle) looks up from her book and raises one hesitant hand as if trying to place the sound of a rustling robe or beating wings. It is a quiet but miraculous image, capturing the fragility and ordinariness of a girl still untouched by the strangeness of the scene to come. The rest of the show consists of fewer than a dozen paintings and drawings, among them a portrait of a slyly smiling merchant that places Antonello in the middle of the dovetailing Netherlandish and Italian traditions. Through March 5. ♦ **"Santiago Calatrava: Sculpture Into Architecture."** Influenced by Brancusi, Matisse, and Giacometti as well as his fellow Spanish visionary Antonio Gaudi, Santiago Calatrava has always been as much a sculptor as an architect. His soaring, winglike buildings—including the proposed new World Trade Center transportation hub—are presented via delicate white architectural models and video tours; his monumental abstract carvings and casts in marble, granite, bronze, and steel fill out the crowded exhibition. Through March 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"In-Depth: The House of Spiritual Retreat by Emilio Ambasz"** examines a house that was built last year in Spain, more than twenty years after it was first designed for an imaginary site. Through March 6. ♦ The retrospective **"John Szarkowski: Photographs."** Through May 15. ♦ **"Edvard Munch: The Modern Life of the Soul"** is the first American museum retrospective of the Norwegian artist (1863-1944) in thirty years. Through May 8. ♦ **"On-Site: New Architecture in Spain,"** a survey of fifty-three recent or planned architectural projects. Through May 1. ♦ A survey of contemporary art from around the world, **"Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Looking"** cants toward work by artists from Islamic societies, though its aim is to demonstrate how assumptions based on

geography can be misleading. Opens Feb. 26. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"David Smith: A Centennial."** Smith (1906-65) parlayed his experiences as a welder, an employee of the Studebaker company, a painter, and an acolyte of the Cubist movement into tremendous steel sculptures that were championed by Clement Greenberg and have become emblems of American modernism. Through May 14. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"Down by Law."** One way of transporting an outlaw aesthetic to an institutional setting is to do it by proxy. The proprietors of the literally doorway-size Wrong Gallery, in Chelsea (Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni, and Ali Subotnick), offer a selection of art representing a "family of bad men and women, a parade of wrong behaviors, illegal practices, suspicious faces, and corrupted minds," shoehorned into a space the size of a few jail cells. Addressing subjects that range from drug use to Kennedy's assassination and Kent State, fifty-four artists, from Weegee to Mike Kelley to Vik Muniz, celebrate the "dark heroes of the American Dream." It's a tight, hip package, but in this era of widespread conflict the parallel between artistic innovation and social transgression feels a little weary. Through May 21. ♦ Few of the permanent-collection works in **"Skin Is a Language"** (the title inverts a statement from Roland Barthes) gain significantly from using skin as the context. Glenn Ligon's text homage to Ralph Ellison is a cogent illustration of this, as is Catherine Opie's photographic self-portrait with a naïve line drawing of a lesbian couple razored into her back. Works that explore skinlike patterns and textures, like Eva Hesse's leaf photogram or Nancy Grossman's S & M leather hood, are serviceable examples, while others, like Roni Horn's photographs of clowns, seem off the mark. Through May 21. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT ALTRIA

120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (917-663-2453)—**"Andrea Zittel: Small Liberties."** Concurrent with the New Museum's retrospective, the Whitney presents a selection of customized "Wagon Stations" made at Zittel's A-Z West project in the desert near Joshua Tree, California. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Darwin"** traces the discoveries and influence of the great naturalist (1809-82) with, among other things, a re-creation of his study, samples of fossils he collected, and live specimens of the types of tortoises, frogs, and iguanas that he encountered in his travels to the Galápagos Islands. Through May 29. ♦ **"The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter"** is back for an eighth year. Through May 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

DIA: BEACON

3 Beekman St., Beacon, N.Y. (845-440-0100)—**"Dia's Andy: Through the Lens of Patronage."** Through April 10. For directions, see www.diabeacon.org. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Temporarily located in the Chelsea Art Museum, 556 W. 22nd St. (212-219-1222)—A list at **"Andrea Zittel: Critical Space"** enumerates "Things I know for sure"; among them are "3. Maintenance takes time and energy that can sometimes impede other forms of progress such as learning about new things" and "9. The creation of rules is more creative than the destruction of them." It's a manifesto that speaks to New Yorkers, who are always pressed for space and time, and who are accustomed to the close proximity of opulence and filth. Zittel examines concepts of luxury, necessity, and freedom through the manufacture of highly specialized vehicles, living units, furnishings, textiles, and "uniforms," which she constructs and wears for six months at a stretch. She devises fold-up studios as compact and secure as ships, with places to lock down coffee cups and desks that disappear into cabinets; she disdains McMansion-era sprawl, favoring twin beds and arm-

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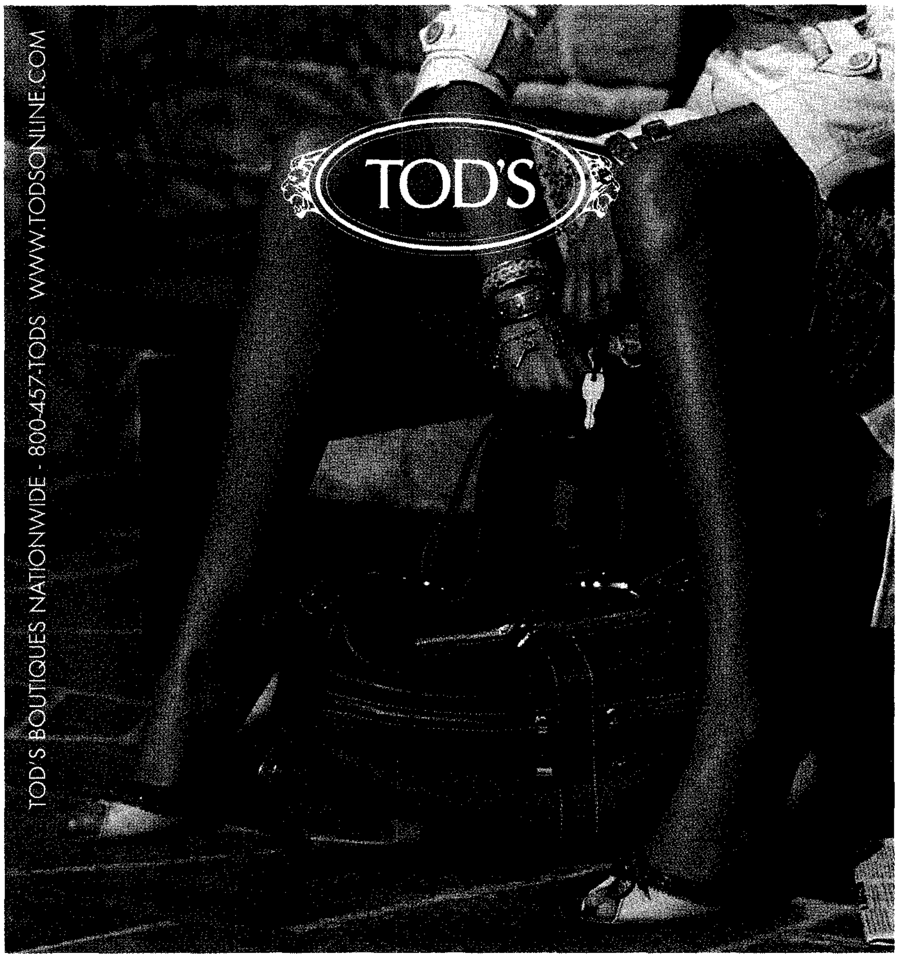
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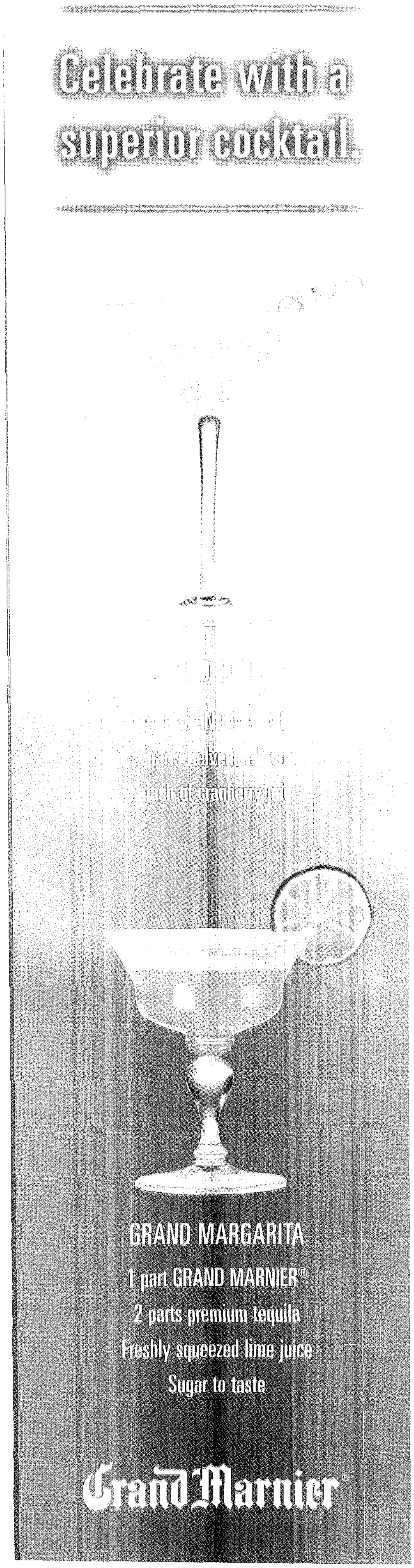


less chairs. Her "repair works" reclaim objects found on the street; her hen-egg incubator houses a single egg at a time. Futuristic fantasies of streamlined practicality aside, no other artist so thoroughly addresses the intersection of consumerism and community. Through April 29. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (212-873-3400)—**"Slavery in New York."** Through March 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—In 2001, the "Freestyle" exhibition coined the art descriptor "post-black," a term that affirms the idea of a show organized via participants' race while demonstrating how young African-American artists are confidently moving beyond commonalities and making use of every style, trope, and medium they can get their hands on. **"Frequency"** revisits this paradigm, with a new selection of up-and-coming practitioners active in the U.S. Most were born in the seventies, and their aesthetics are wildly varied. Look for work by Sedrick E. Huckaby, Xaviera Simmons, and Paula Wilson and the inspired video by Hank Willis Thomas and Kambui Olujimi, which uses modified G.I. Joes to tell a tale of bling and blood. Through March 12. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

LOU REED
One gallery would have been enough for the photographic work of this all-purpose rock legend. Reed's style is earnest, romantic, and shockingly unoriginal, and his subjects are camera-club staples: sunsets, clouds, the surface of the river, deserted streets. The Empire State and Chrysler Buildings crop up in some arty abstractions of neon squiggles at night, but the skyline in most of Reed's shots is, unfortunately, New Jersey's. Perhaps in homage to Robert Mapplethorpe, both shows include black-and-white closeups of Reed's shrewd, probing eyes. It's hard to believe that this is all they see. Through Feb. 25. (Hermès, 691 Madison Ave. 212-751-3181; Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)

"FINE LINE"
Cartoonists are not the only artists featured in this group show. But their presence—from Saul Steinberg to Jules Feiffer, J. J. Sempé to Chris Ware—casts a cartoony light on works by others that would more properly be called "drawings." This is good. James Castle, a deaf man who never learned to read or write, renders a crowded interior on the back of a matchbook, using just soot and spit; Martin Wilner, in a different take on the crudity of available materials, makes highly subjective portraits of contemporary newsmakers. Alice Attie's maniacally delicate spheres are made up of separate, threadlike lines. The roster of participants ranges from Picasso to H. C. Westermann to Daniel Zeller. Through March 11. (Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 212-861-7338.)

Short List

ERIC FISCHL: Yoshii, 17 E. 76th St. 212-744-5550. Through March 18. **AGNES MARTIN:** Pace-Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292. Through March 4. **FRANCIS PICABIA:** Michael Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623. Through April 15. **ALEXEY TITARENKO/PENTTI SAMMALLAHTI:** Nailya Alexander and Candace Dwan, 24 W. 57th St. 212-315-2211. Through March 25.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

ROBERT ADAMS
Although the great expeditions are long past, Adams carries on the dogged documentation started more than a century ago by the pioneering photographers of the American West. The hundred and thirty-seven black-and-white photos in his extraordinary "Turning Back" series—just shown at SFMOMA—follow the route Lewis and Clark took across the Northwest Territory, but in reverse, beginning at the Pacific Ocean

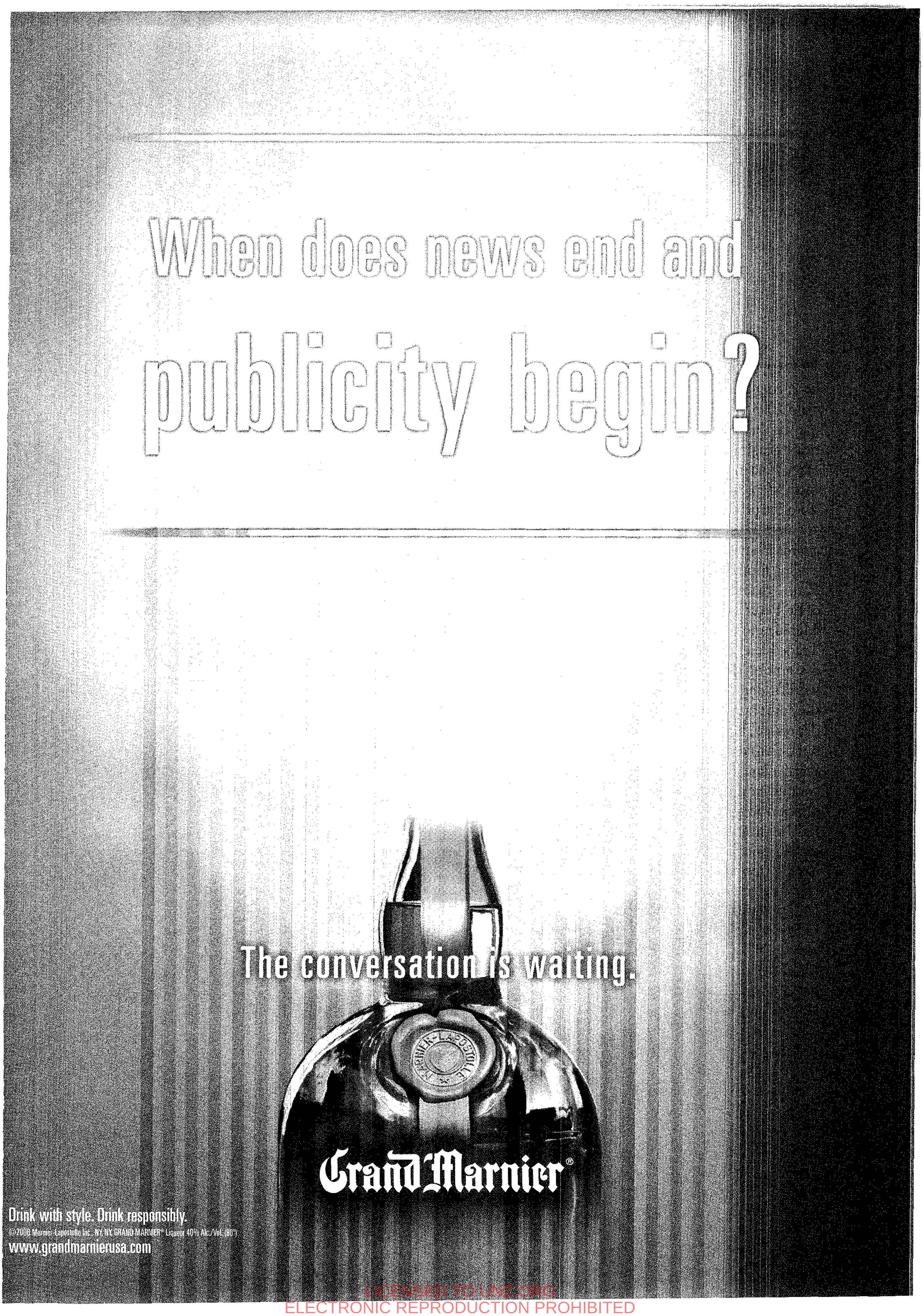
TABLES FOR TWO
YAKITORI TOTTO

251 W. 55th St. (212-245-4555)—With bird flu inching toward us and more than a million Americans falling victim to salmonella each year, this might not seem like the smartest time to eat raw chicken. Still, unless this bustling little yakitori joint is playing a dangerous practical joke, chicken sashimi is a delicacy in Japan. Like many extreme foods, it turns out to be less dramatically weird than one secretly hoped. Something like yellowtail sashimi in appearance and texture, but with a flavor less distinctive than that of most raw fish, the raw chicken is best served with an accompaniment—a marvellously aggressive wasabi, chopped very coarse, or pickled plums that impart a smoky flavor. Non-Japanese diners are asked if they really want to eat it raw, but the staff's friendly professionalism reassures one that, as with trapeze artists or brain surgeons, whatever they are doing must be safe.

Even once the chicken is cooked (yakitori means chicken grilled on a skewer), things stay strange. Yakitori Totto cooks the whole chicken, and then some: the skin (a crispy ribbon twirled round the skewer), the gizzard (improbably fibrous, almost like celery), the tail (a deliquescent dollop of fat that makes you forget to wonder if chickens actually have tails). More familiar areas of the chicken also make appearances—wings, thighs, breast—while a delicious chicken meatball, served with a raw egg to dunk it in, seems to be posing the riddle about which came first.

Yet the strangest thing on the menu is not chicken at all, but seaweed. Forget crispy fried *nori* or pliant *hijiki*: *mekabu* comes in a coating of—there's no other word for it—goo. As one chews, it starts to expand, until suffocation starts to seem like a real possibility. Happily, there is plenty on the menu for even the most timid diner, such as enoki mushrooms wrapped in bacon, fried pork dumplings, and delicate tempura silverfish with green-tea dipping powder. The place—up a flight of stairs from a row of Japanese restaurants—serves past midnight, but it's advisable to arrive early, because the largely Japanese crowd quickly exhausts the scarcer cuts. Try as we might, we never got to sample "soft knee bone" (only two per chicken, after all) or the enigmatic "soft bone," which, the waitress explained, requires three chickens per serving. Where was this bone? The waitress turned and pointed at her bottom. (Open daily for dinner. Dishes $1.50-$12.)

—*Leo Carey*



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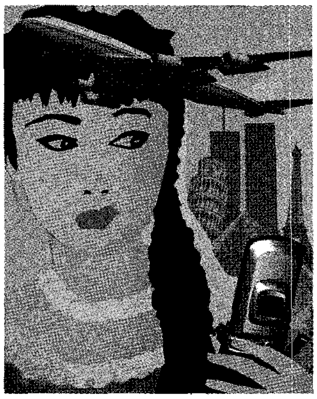
OUT OF THIS WORLD



Jia Zhangke's "The World," from 2005, now on DVD, may be the most acid and heartbreaking portrait to date of a China in transition. The movie depicts young people from the provinces who work as entertainers and security guards in an enormous Beijing tourist trap—World Park—that features replicas of St. Peter's, the Taj Mahal, and the World Trade Center. These youths live among simulacra of the world's glamour spots, yet they are trapped and depressed, lurching in and out of hapless and inarticulate love affairs conducted mainly by cell phone and text message. Jia is an ironist, a disillusioned romantic, and a modernist all at once. He poses his characters in haunting open spaces with a ludicrous scaled-down version of the Eiffel Tower forlornly decorating the far distance. In his melancholy view, Communism has failed and capitalism does little but stimulate appetites that can't be fulfilled. His characters are appealing but irritable and unawakened. Not even eros brings them fully to life. In all, the movie is a requiem for a future that hasn't quite arrived yet.

—*David Denby*

and crossing the Cascade Mountains into eastern Oregon. Along the way, Adams records the barren, shattered landscapes where great forests once stood, but the journey is not without its sublime asides, and it ends in a quiet idyll among apple trees. Any sign of hope here is hard won, but all the more prized. Through Feb. 25. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200.)

ALEXANDER CALDER

Despite Calder's status as a mid-century abstractionist, the artist ancestor this show most conjures is Rodin. Like the fin-de-siècle French master, whose sculptures have been posthumously cast in a variety of sizes, Calder's "stabiles" (the stationary counterparts to his mobiles) are equally effective in small, medium, and large. The emphasis here is on small: that is, the maquettes, or preliminary models. Over thirty of these perch on pedestals or rise up from the floor like strange spiky animals, their work-in-progress status revealed by the dimensions written on their sheet-metal surfaces. The largest, an intermediate-sized maquette, is the nearly twelve-foot tall, twenty-four-foot long, red "Jerusalem Stabile" (1976), which towers like an undulating mountain range over its smaller peers. Through March 4. (PaceWildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-989-4258.)

ALFREDO JAAR

Five different recordings of a folk song titled "Muxima"—it means "heart" in Kimbundu—provide the soundtrack to Jaar's half-hour film of the same name, which was shot in Angola. The documentary tone poem has arresting moments: an aerial shot of colorfully dressed women doing laundry in bright plastic tubs; decrepit statues standing guard beside a roofless fort; a man walking softly through verdant underbrush, who turns out to be searching for unexploded land mines. Jaar's elegy has a distancing effect, however. He cuts away from the bomb specialist's sweating concentration just at the moment when we most need to know what happens, and interviews with people lamenting missing relatives are drowned out by song. Through March 18. (Lelong, 528 W. 26th St. 212-315-0470.)

FLORIAN MAIER-AICHEN

Like so many contemporary photographers, Maier-Aichen has made a career of undermining the trust we once put in the medium. At first glance, his pictures—mostly large-scale, unpopulated landscapes—appear straightforward, if skewed. Nearly all colors but magenta have been drained from views of a shoreline and of a skier's mountain, for instance. But look closer and other more subtle and disquieting manipulations of scale, texture, and subject crop up. Images of a nighttime snow scene, an agitated seascape, and the toppling of a smokestack occupy the increasingly fertile ground between photography and painting. Through Feb. 25. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.)

MATT MULLICAN

Quirky doesn't begin to describe Mullican's investigations of the outer reaches of Conceptualism. In the semiotics-besotted eighties, he devised street-sign graphics for slippery, image-averse concepts like God and death. For the last few decades he's also been making art under hypnosis. The current body of work occupies a zone somewhere between autism and psychic automatism. Bedsheets hung from the ceiling serve as supports for drawings made by "that person": the "Other" Mullican becomes while making art. The simple black-and-white drawings range from funny textual musings to decorative doodling, but how they look is hardly the point. Like most of his recent efforts, this show probes the origins of creativity and the portals through which it can be tapped. Through March 11. (Burgin, 243 W. 18th St. 212-462-2668.)

LES ROGERS

"Good artists copy, great artists steal," Picasso supposedly said. It's a sentiment that favors Rogers, who has cribbed an episode from the Spanish master's biography and used it as fodder for his current body of work. Picasso's portraits of Sylvette David, a young French woman he met in the early fifties, are updated here in Photo-Realist paintings of a girl named Lindsey, whom Rogers discovered, naturally, online, and knows only through her posted photos and missives. Lindsey's face, fringed with a fashionable mop of hair, looms over the viewer, occasionally morphing into hallucinogenic expressionism. The brash light and oblique framing mimic digital photos taken on the fly; unlike Picasso, Rogers would rather immerse himself in Lindsey's world than "elevate" her to traditional, unworldly art-muse status. Through March 4. (Koenig, 545 W. 23rd St. 212-334-9255.)

"HIDING IN THE LIGHT"

The press release for this group show touts the "complex interchange of celebrity, audience, participation, and escape." If you can push any snide reservations aside (how complex is it, really, to begin with? and haven't all those nuances been rehashed a thousand times?), there are some nice moments in the show. It's fun to see Andy Warhol's early-sixties "Screen Tests" projected at wall size, and Rudolf Stingel's mirrored floor, which fills the whole gallery, is glammy and silly in equal proportion. Also included are works by Carol Bove, Candice Breitz, Amy Gartrell, Larry Johnson, Jeff Koons, and Aleksandra Mir. Through Feb. 25. (Mary Boone, 541 W. 24th St. 212-752-2929.)

Short List

ROY DECARAVA: Jenkins Johnson, 521 W. 26th St. 212-629-0707. Through March 11. **BENDIX HARMS:** Kern, 532 W. 20th St. 212-367-9663. Through Feb. 25. **ROXY PAINE:** James Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500. Through Feb. 25. **ALEC SOTH:** Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111. Through Feb. 25.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

The company's winter repertory season ends as it began, with a performance of Balanchine's luminous "Symphony in C." This last week also includes ballets spanning much of N.Y.C.B.'s history, with works by the four choreographers most closely identified with it, including Balanchine's whimsical cowboy extravaganza, "Western Symphony" (as well as his evocation of Hapsburg decadence, the "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet"), Jerome Robbins's gripping insect revenge tale, "The Cage," and "Friandises," a new ballet by Peter Martins with blindingly fast, virtuosic dancing. In "Scènes de Ballet," Christopher Wheeldon's piece for fifty-two students from the School of American Ballet, design—Ian Falconer's evocation of a grand, slightly faded Old World ballet studio—and dance blend to create a sophisticated fantasy about a ballet lesson. ♦ Feb. 22 at 7:30: "Scènes de Ballet," "Tālā Gaisma," and "Western Symphony." ♦ Feb. 23 at 8: "Friandises," "Romeo and Juliet" (balcony scene), "Sonatas and Interludes," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." ♦ Feb. 24 at 8: "After the Rain," "The Cage," "Concertino," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." ♦ Feb. 25 at 2: "Friandises," "The Cage," "After the Rain," and "Symphony in C." ♦ Feb. 25 at 8: "Scènes de Ballet," "Sonatas and Interludes," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." ♦ Feb. 26 at 3: "Octet," "The Cage," "Concertino," and "Symphony in C." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570.)

REGGIE WILSON/FIST AND HEEL PERFORMANCE GROUP

Wilson's unusually wide-ranging explorations of the African diaspora continue in "The Tale: Npinpee Nckutchie and the Tail of the Golden Dek." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Feb. 22-25 at 7:30.)

DANZAHOY

Popular in Europe and Latin America, this Venezuelan troupe last appeared in New York in 1983. It returns with "Éxodo," an evening-length work about the "exile of the soul." The score is tango, the costumes are black, and the stage is strewn with red flowers, yet the mode is European contemporary—lots of running in circles, fists in mouths. The romantic melancholy in the music pulls at the general alienation like an undertow, and the choreography is strongest when it gives in. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Feb. 21-24 at 8, Feb. 25 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 26 at 2 and 7:30.)

"KINGS OF THE DANCE"

If ballet had all-star voting, a lot of ballots would be cast for the headliners of this four-night City Center gala: the Bolshoi's Nikolay Tsiskaridze, the Royal Ballet's Johan Kobborg, and A.B.T.'s Angel Corella and Ethan Stiefel. Besides trotting out one classic male

STEPHEN KRONINGER

variation apiece, each of the four kings also dances a solo tailor-made for him: Kobborg performs Tim Rushton's version of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune," Stiefel premières Nils Christe's "Wavemaker," Tsiskaridze dances a new "Carmen" solo by Roland Petit, and Corella débuts a Stanton Welch solo. Flemming Flindt's dark 1963 piece "The Lesson" is danced by the Royal Danish Ballet's Gudrun Bojesen, with the male principals alternating in the lead role, and all four stars have roles in a new Christopher Wheeldon piece created for the occasion. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Feb. 23-25 at 8 and Feb. 26 at 3.)

BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY
"Another Evening: I Bow Down" is the latest of Jones's frequently revelatory, Cunningham-style events, for which he selects and shuffles pieces of repertory and stitches them together with new patches. This time around, the new elements include the Bronx hardcore band Regain the Heart Condemned (a bone for the N.Y.U. audience?). The music director, Daniel Bernard Roumain, mans the laptop and performs both his own compositions and Anton Batagov's "Prostration to the Thirty-Five Buddhas." (Skirball Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-279-4200. Feb. 21, Feb. 23, and Feb. 25 at 8.)

"THOUSAND YEARS WAITING"
The Japanese-born choreographer-director Sonoko Kawahara and the Japanese-American playwright Chiori Miyagawa explore the nature of storytelling in a dance-theatre piece built around the near-extinct form of Otome Bunraku, which features a female puppeteer. A trio of performers and a child-size Bunraku puppet (operated by the Japanese puppet master Masaya Kiritake) move in and out of three settings: contemporary New York, Japan in 1000 A.D., and the fictional world of "The Tale of Genji." With an original score by Bruce Odland. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. 212-352-3101. Feb. 23-24 at 8, Feb. 25 at 4:30 and 8, and Feb. 26 at 4:30. Through March 12.)

TRAJAL HARRELL / KAREN BERNARD
Karen Bernard looks like someone you might find sitting next to you at the vet's office, and she utilizes this normalness in raw, emotionally open performances. In a double bill at the Kitchen curated by the downtown choreographer Tere O'Connor, Bernard has a new solo work, "Totally in Love," in which she effectively uses video, audio, and movement—mimicry, realistic actions, social dance—as well as speech to evoke her feelings about the passing of time. "Before Intermission," by the young choreographer Trajal Harrell, is a dreamily cerebral exploration of themes from James Baldwin's novel of sexual identity "Giovanni's Room," in which period costumes, elaborate makeup, and the alienating faux-erotic poses of the fashion runway overlay the languorous movements of an androgynous, seemingly vulnerable figure. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Feb. 24-25 at 8.)

PEGGY SPINA TAP COMPANY
What does it take to keep a modest tap company going for twenty-five years? Real estate helps. Spina's eager-to-please dancers rehearse and perform in her SoHo loft, an appropriately intimate theatre for their warm, informal concerts. The silver-anniversary program features two new ensemble pieces by Spina, a selection of repertory works, and, as always, accompaniment by the able and versatile Joel Forrester Quartet. (Spina Loft, 115 Prince St. 212-674-8885. Feb. 24 at 8 and Feb. 25 at 6 and 8:30. Through March 4.)

PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY
As an encore to last year's fiftieth-anniversary retrospective, the venerable company presents an ambitious three-week season, with two New York premières and sixteen revivals. On opening night, Donald York and the Orchestra of St. Luke's furnish live music for a triple bill that begins with the New York début of "Spring Rounds," set to music by Strauss. First performed by the San Francisco Ballet last spring, "Spring Rounds" has a lilting, sirocco mood—the dancers wear forsythia yellow—and courtly touches brushed onto its storybook tableaux. Sandwiched between "Spring Rounds" and the buoyant "Mercuric Tidings" is the acidic "Lost, Found and Lost" (1982), in which girls in mod black bodysuits and caps pose under the white glare of supermarket lighting, to a collage of sixties elevator music. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Feb. 28 at 7. Through March 19.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Feb. 22 at 8 and Feb. 25 at 1:30: The mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina lends her regal voice to the Met's colorful production of **"Samson et Dalila,"** joining the tenor Clifton Forbis in the title roles; Emmanuel Villaume conducts. ♦ Feb. 23 at 7:30 and Feb. 27 at 8: The company's revival of **"La Traviata,"** Verdi's lyrically captivating study of Parisian sexual mores, is not quite a succès fou. The imperious Angela Gheorghiu provides moments of thrilling vocalism but throws half of her notes into the wings; Jonas Kaufmann's strong, baritonal tenor is so implacable as to permit no shading of character; and Anthony Michaels-Moore's potent Germont is steeped in a Fischer-Dieskau marinade. Marco Armiliato conducts with abundant energy but little sense of design. (Note: Mary Dunleavy replaces Gheorghiu in the Feb. 23 performance.) ♦ Feb. 24 at 8 and Feb. 28 at 7:30: Giancarlo del Monaco's old-school production of **"La Forza del Destino,"** a sprawling and far-fetched Romantic opera that stretched Verdi to his limits, is revived for Deborah Voigt and Salvatore Licitra, who head a cast that also includes Ildikó Komlósi, Mark Delavan, Juan Pons, and Samuel Ramey; Gianandrea Noseda conducts. ♦ Feb. 25 at 8:30: The wonderful Natalie Dessay returns in Gounod's **"Roméo et Juliette"** with her original Roméo, the impeccable Ramón Vargas. Bertrand de Billy, a master of French style, leads a crisp and telling accompaniment. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

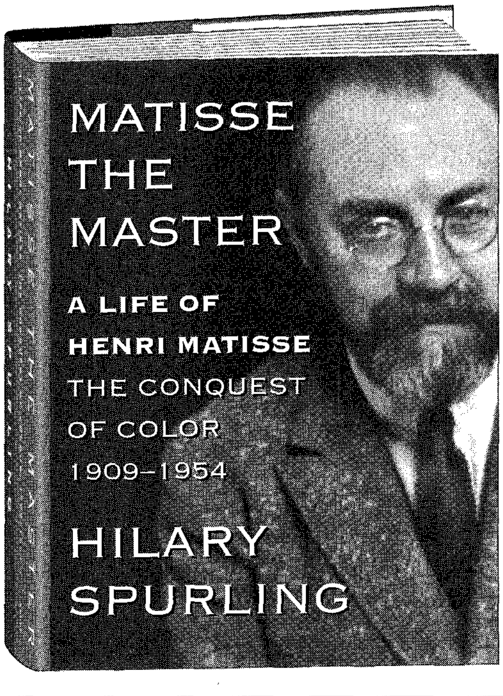
OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK: "LAKMÉ"
Delibes's exotic Romantic staple—including the Flower Duet, the tune that launched a thousand television ads—will receive the ardent advocacy of Eve Queler's company, with the soprano Eglise Gutierrez, the tenor Yeghishe Manucharyan, and the bass James Morris in the leading roles. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 26 at 8.)

AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS: "DARKLING"
The composers Stefan Weisman and Lee Hoiby have collaborated on this experimental work directed by Michael Comlish, based on Anna Rabinowitz's book of Holocaust memories. The tenor Jon Garrison and the baritone Marcus DeLoach lead a cast that includes the singers Jody Sheinbaum and Mark Uhlemann and the actress Elzbieta Czyzewska; members of the Flux Quartet provide the instrumental backup. (East 13th Street Theatre, Third Ave. at 13th St. 212-279-4200. Feb. 28 at 8; through March 18.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
John Harbison, long one of America's most skillful and sensitive song composers, has written a new cycle, "Milosz Songs" (settings of texts by the eminent Polish poet), commissioned by the Philharmonic. Dawn Upshaw, a richly expressive exponent of Harbison's music, sings the world-première performances under Robert Spano, who also conducts works by Bartók (Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta) and Bernstein (the Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story"). (Feb. 23 at 7:30 and Feb. 24-25 at 8.) ♦ Upshaw will also perform the work in a shorter "Hear & Now" concert, which features a discussion with the composer hosted by Steven Stucky. (Feb. 28 at 6:45.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

ANDRÁS SCHIFF AND CAPPELLA ANDREA BARCA
Feb. 23 at 8: The most sensitive and insightful of pianists conducts and performs with his orchestra



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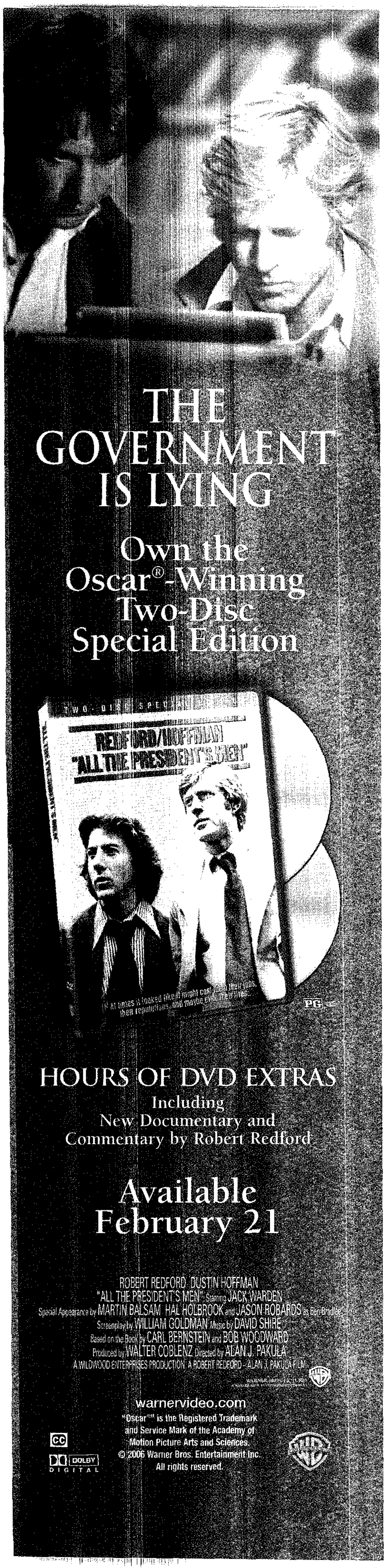
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DOLBY DIGITAL

in a pair of Mozart tributes; the first features the Piano Concertos Nos. 12 and 17 and the Symphony No. 33 in B-Flat Major. ♦ Feb. 25 at 8: The Concertos Nos. 18-19 and the Sinfonia Concertante in E-Flat Major, K. 364. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC
The orchestra—a band in serious need of a mission—has rolled the dice on Michael Christie, an up-and-coming maestro, as its next music director. He'll pull out all the stops for his inaugural concert, an evening that includes music by Stravinsky ("Symphonies of Wind Instruments"), Glass, and Orff ("Carmina Burana," with the New York Virtuoso Singers and dances choreographed by Nicholas Leichter), all preluded by a new fanfare by John Corigliano. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Feb. 25 at 8.)

MOSCOW CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Ewa Podleś, a contralto of extraordinary richness and power, sings Mussorgsky's "Songs and Dances of Death" on a program conducted by Constantine Orbelian that also includes Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony in C Minor (an arrangement of the Eighth Quartet). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. Feb. 26 at 3.)

LES VIOLONS DU ROY
The superb early-music orchestra from Quebec City—led by Bernard Labadie, a maestro with an exceptional lyrical gift—teams up with the mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená for an evening of arias by Gluck and Rameau. (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 26 at 7:30.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Christoph Eschenbach conducts Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony, preceded by the New York première of "Insomnia," by the conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen, who is becoming as highly regarded for his music as he is for his leadership of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 28 at 8.)

RECITALS

CHAMBER MUSIC AT THE 92ND STREET Y
The violinist Jaime Laredo and the cellist Sharon Robinson join several friends (such as the hornist David Jolley, the violist Kim Kashkashian, and the cellist Zuill Bailey) for chamber works by Mozart and Martinů. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Feb. 21-22 at 8.)

JOSHUA BELL AND JEREMY DENK
Bell, one of the few classical artists to enjoy rock-star status, joins one of New York's most perceptive young pianists for a concert of works by Beethoven (the "Kreutzer" Sonata), Mozart, Prokofiev, and Bartók (the First Rhapsody), along with a little Caprice by Ysaÿe. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 22 at 8.)

BANG ON A CAN ALL-STARS
Downtown New York's avant-garde masters offer their annual "People's Commissioning Fund" concert, which features new works by Annie Gosfield, Yoav Gal, John Hollenbeck, and the great Ornette Coleman—all paid for by the All-Stars' ardent fans. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Feb. 22 at 8.)

CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF AND LARS VOGT
The young German violin-and-piano duo, having released the most persuasive recordings of the Brahms Violin Sonatas in a generation, performs them live at Alice Tully Hall. (212-721-6500. Feb. 22 at 8.)

JOHN O'CONOR
The Irish pianist, renowned for his limpid Beethoven interpretations, performs the "Waldstein" Sonata along with works by Haydn and Schubert. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 212-570-3949. Feb. 23 at 8. For full schedule, see www.metmuseum.org.)

MILLER THEATRE
Feb. 23 at 8: The group Continuum brings its considerable skills to a tribute to Luigi Dallapiccola, the mid-century Italian modernist who wrote twelve-tone technique in an impassioned Italianate style. ♦ Feb. 24 at 8: Michelle Makarski, a violinist with a number of ECM disks under her belt, teams up with the pianist Lydia Artymiw in sonatas by Mozart and Bach (as well as Stravinsky's "Duo Concertante"). (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799.)

TAKÁCS QUARTET
The Hungarian-Anglo-American foursome, just hitting their prime, offer string quartets by Bartók (No. 2) and Schubert (in A Minor, D. 804), along with Mozart's String Quintet in C Major, K. 515 (with the violist James Dunham). (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 24 at 7:30.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Feb. 24 at 8 and Feb. 26 at 5: The pianist Angela Hewitt, noted for her Bach interpretations, joins members of the society for an all-French program of works by Debussy, Ravel (the Piano Trio), and Franck (the Piano Quintet). ♦ Feb. 28 at 7:30: David Finckel and Wu Han, the husband-and-wife cello-and-piano duo who direct the society, offer an all-Russian evening of sonatas by Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, and Lera Auerbach (a première). (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. Feb. 28 at 7:30.)

ALFRED BRENDEL
The philosopher king of European pianists, a vital presence for half a century, performs sonatas and smaller pieces by Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert (the Sonata in G Major, D. 894). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 27 at 8.)

MOVIES OPENING

DIRTY
Cuba Gooding, Jr., stars as a corrupt police officer in this drama, directed by Chris Fisher. Opening Feb. 24. (Empire 25 and 34th Street Theatre.)

DOOGAL
An animated comedy, directed by Dave Borthwick, Jean Duval, and Frank Passingham, about children who join with a dog to battle a wizard. Opening Feb. 24. (In wide release.)

LITTLE FISH
In this Australian drama, Cate Blanchett stars as a woman who battles drug addiction. Directed by Rowan Woods. Opening Feb. 24. (Village East Cinemas.)

MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION
Tyler Perry wrote and directed this comedy, about a grandmother (Perry) who organizes a family reunion. Opening Feb. 24. (In wide release.)

RUNNING SCARED
An action drama, written and directed by Wayne Kramer, about a mobster whose stolen gun is used in a killing. Opening Feb. 24. (In wide release.)

STREET FIGHT
Marshall Curry directed this documentary about the 2002 mayoral campaign in Newark. Opening Feb. 22. (IFC Center.)

TRUDELL
A documentary, directed by Heather Rae, about the Native American poet and activist John Trudell. Opening Feb. 24. (Quad Cinema.)

TSOTSI
Reviewed below in Now Playing. In Zulu, Xhosa, and Afrikaans. Opening Feb. 24. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

UNKNOWN WHITE MALE
A documentary, directed by Rupert Murray, about an Englishman in New York who has amnesia. Opening Feb. 24. (Sunshine Cinema.)

WORKINGMAN'S DEATH
Michael Glawogger directed this documentary about dangerous manual labor around the world. In German, English, Ibo, Indonesian, Mandarin, and Russian. Opening Feb. 24. (Cinema Village.)

NOW PLAYING

BATTLE IN HEAVEN
First we see a slim young woman giving a fat middle-aged man a blow job. Then we learn that she is the daughter of a Mexican general and he

is the family's chauffeur. Then we discover that he and his obese wife have kidnapped a child who has died in their custody. Then the ungainly couple have sex. Then the young woman goes to a house party with other overprivileged kids. Then she and the chauffeur have sex. Finally, the film offers a theatrical act of repentance for a real crime. The point? Sex sells, all the more so on the pedestal of arty camerawork, political moralizing, and religious sentiment. A hit at the 2005 Cannes festival; directed by Carlos Reygadas. In Spanish.—*Richard Brody* (Angelika Film Center.)

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

In the summer of 1963, Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal) herd the sheep on Brokeback Mountain, in Wyoming, and fall in love. Ang Lee's movie traces the ups and downs of that love over many years, making it clear that the downs are fated to outnumber the ups. The film has a curious motion to begin with, managing to seem at once hectic and sluggish; once the heroes start to grow up, however, and thus to struggle against their feelings, the story comes painfully alive, and the performances stretch toward the tragic. There is fine support from Anne Hathaway and Michelle Williams as the baffled wives of the two men, but the picture belongs to Ledger, whose downcast gaze and chewed-up words bear almost unbearable testimony to a heart under siege. Any attempt to promote this as an issue movie, gripped by an agenda, feels badly misplaced; the only issue here is the oldest and most sorrowful one of all.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 12/12/05.) (In wide release.)

CURIOUS GEORGE

A joyless animated banalization of the children's classic. The Man with the Yellow Hat is given a mission (to save the natural-history museum that employs him as a curator), an enemy (the museum director's son), and a love interest (a schoolteacher whose class he guides), and George himself, who is quietly defiant in the books by H. A. and Margret Rey, is here purely innocent. The tale is too loaded with backstory to take off, the patter and the psychology are formulaic, and the under-realized drawings are devoid of magic. Preschool kids will be neither displeased nor elated, but older ones won't be so easily fooled, and for parents it'll be a chore.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

DARWIN'S NIGHTMARE

In Hubert Sauper's Oscar-nominated documentary, Russian cargo planes take off from a crude airfield near Lake Victoria in Tanzania and transport tons of fish fillets to Europe. The fish, Nile perch, is not indigenous to the lake; it was put there, as an official explains, by "one man with one bucket in one afternoon," and it devoured the native species. The fishing industry offers the lakeside villages plentiful, if arduous and underpaid, employment, yet there is widespread famine nearby, and civil war is brewing. Sauper gets the flight crews to admit that they are bringing weapons to Africa—and reveals an eager local market for them, since, as several of the Tanzanians interviewed here admit, war is good business. Sauper, who also did the cinematography, has an avid eye for wonder and sorrow, from the opening shots of an air-traffic controller's comic pursuit of an annoying bee to the sad companionship of pilots and prostitutes. As great forces of history converge to human scale, this modern-day boom town feels like the Wild West but without the confident self-reliance: the articulate residents are painfully aware of the close link between their sustenance and their misery, and international bureaucrats reveal a terrible disconnection from the reality on the ground as they encourage the unchecked development. In English, Russian, and Swahili.—*R.B.* (IFC Center.)

FIREWALL

A bomb of a thriller, with a hopelessly grumpy Harrison Ford as a security-system expert forced to coöperate with a nasty villain (played with cool ease by Paul Bettany) who wants millions deposited into his offshore bank account. Endless computer-hacking dialogue, a tearful kidnapped family, and a dog with a G.P.S. collar combine for the most ludicrous of stories, and the director, Richard Loncraine, cribs from almost every action movie he's ever seen.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

THE HEARTBREAK KID

Elaine May's anxious comedy, from 1972, is about two young New York Jews. Leonard Allen Cantrow (Charles Grodin), a sporting-goods salesman, and Lila Ina Kolodny (Jeannie Berlin, May's daughter) meet in a singles bar and are soon joined in wedlock. The marriage is consummated in a motel in Virginia (of course), and Len is disappointed. On the first day of their honeymoon in Miami Beach, he meets Kelly Corcoran (Cybill Shepherd), the porcelain shiksa goddess of his dreams, for whom he neglects—and prepares to leave—his bride. May, in her second film, directs with bristling restraint: the camera is kept running at length to keep the characters trapped in the excruciating moment, and with the central trio of typecast actors tightly held this side of parody, the humor oscillates between sour comedy and droll tragedy. The world according to May is a man's world: working with a Neil Simon script based on a novel by Bruce Jay Friedman, she yields up a living artifact of the age of Portnoy and captures the sense of wonder, entitlement, and implausibly boundless possibility of a time when even a self-proclaimed schmuck like Len Cantrow, endowed with little but the gift of gab, attempted daring feats of self-liberation.—*R.B.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 25-26.)

MATCH POINT

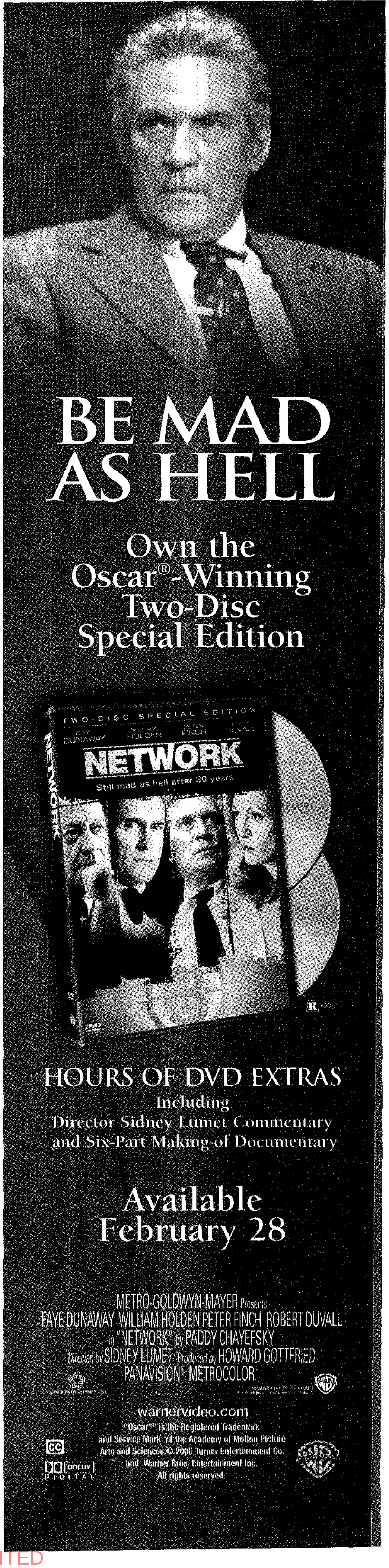
Woody Allen's latest movie is set in upper-class contemporary London, where two impoverished outsiders—Chris Wilton (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), an Irish-born tennis pro, and Nola Rice (Scarlett Johansson), an unsuccessful young American actress—are both trying to marry into a very wealthy English family. At first, the conversational idiom is falsely debonair, the plot too easily manipulated. But then the two interlopers face each other in a bar and the movie takes off. Rhys Meyers, who has widely spaced blue eyes and a flattened upper lip, can look angelic or brutally calculating at will. Johansson, poured into a white dress, also has an unusual upper lip, curved and fleshy, and a low, smoky voice. What follows is the most passionate and explicitly erotic love scenes that Allen has ever directed. The movie's narrative scheme becomes urgent and will-driven in the manner of Dreiser: Chris suddenly has one woman too many on his hands. Against our better instincts, we are with this cold-blooded murderer every inch of the way.—*David Denby* (1/9/06) (In wide release.)

MUNICH

Steven Spielberg's latest film begins at the Olympic Games in 1972 with the kidnapping and killing of Israeli athletes. It then follows the Israelis' plan to eliminate those whom—rightly or wrongly—they suspect of having backed the attack. Eric Bana plays a Mossad agent who, leaving behind his case officer (Geoffrey Rush) and his pregnant wife (Ayelet Zurer), heads to Europe, where a band of his fellow-specialists join him in the quest for revenge. This, for all the director's well-oiled narrative skills, is largely a matter of statistics: the film starts to drag as the team works its way through eleven specified targets (plus the slaying of a Dutch hit woman, the most gratuitous scene that Spielberg has ever devised). There has been much inflamed debate over the movie's politics, but the efforts of Spielberg and his screenwriters, Tony Kushner and Eric Roth, to strike a balance—by gesturing to Palestinian grievances or to the assassins' own qualms—leave the film looking agonized and heavy. Good intentions, and a range of strong performances, are never quite enough to quicken the pulse.—*A.L.* (12/26/05 & 1/2/06) (In wide release.)

THE NEW WORLD

Terrence Malick's retelling of the Pocahontas story may be grounded in historical research, but it floats toward the airiness of legend. Colin Farrell plays Captain John Smith, who lands in 1607 at what will become Jamestown, Virginia. There he encounters a young tribal princess (Q'Orianka Kilcher) and falls in love with her—or, rather, with the purity of body and spirit that she enshrines. This lasts until the outbreak of hostilities between the locals and the British; with peace restored and Smith reassigned, Pocahontas travels to England with her husband, John Rolfe (Christian Bale), and child. This final act is the consummation of the film's concerns, and of its semi-stoned amazement at the world. When Malick (with help from Mozart and



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Wagner) is at full blast, his peculiarities—the preference for monologue over conversation, and for lyrical meandering over forthright action—somehow fall into place.—*A.L.* (12/26/05 & 1/2/06) (In wide release.)

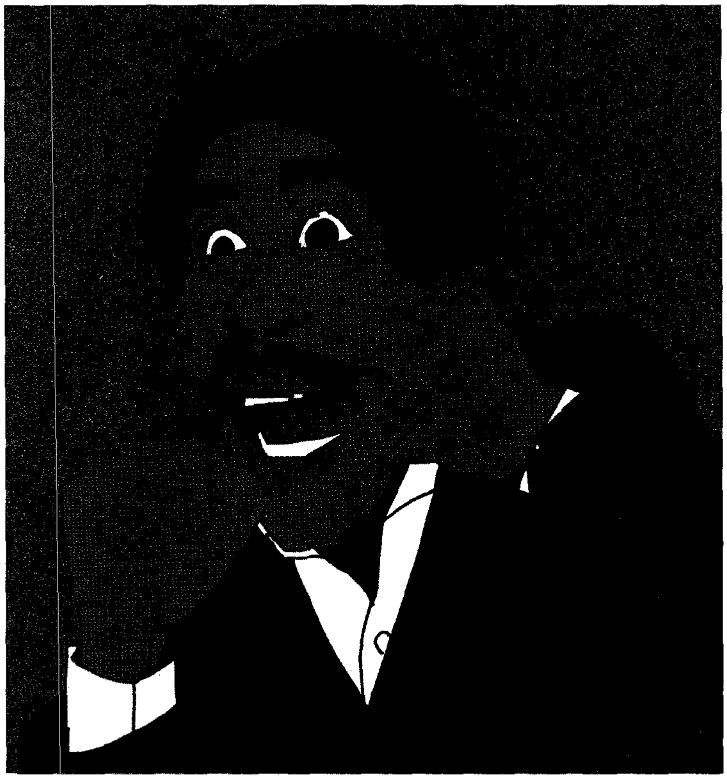
NIGHT WATCH
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. In Russian. (Sunshine Cinema.)

PRINCESS TAM TAM
Josephine Baker explodes the Pygmalion underpinnings of this rickety 1935 French farce about a celebrated novelist (Albert Préjean) who takes a beautiful native girl (Baker) from Tunisia back to Paris and parades her as an exotic princess to annoy his estranged wife (Germaine Aussey), who's been flirting intensely with a lady-killing maharaja (Jean Galland). When the heroine goes slumming at a sailor's bistro and breaks into a dance—it's like a Charleston crossed with a high-kicking jazz clog—her eruption of energy, creativity, and soul is elating. But not as elating as it should be. The director Edmond T. Gréville's shooting and cutting prove more insulting to Baker than anything the film's feckless white folks do to her character. Though Gréville keeps pace with the plot tricks (the screenwriter Pepito Abatino frames the whole thing as a story within a story), he's not able to keep up with Baker. After she jumps into a climactic night-club conga with her own sort of African samba, he provides too few shots of her entire body in full ripple and writhe. Nonetheless, the film documents Baker as an irrepressible personality, both electric and dreamy, and a performer whose open-faced zest incinerates the various kinds of condescension surrounding her. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of the Moving Image; Feb. 25-26.)

SOPHIE SCHOLL: THE FINAL DAYS
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. In German. (Film Forum.)

THE TRUCK
There are only two people in this film: Marguerite Duras and Gérard Depardieu, and they sit at a round table in a room in her home, and never leave it. Serene, half-smiling, she reads aloud the script of a film in which Depardieu would act the role of a truck driver who picks up a woman hitchhiker. The film alternates between sequences in the room and sequences of a rolling truck, seen always at a distance. Each time Duras cuts from the room to the truck, we're drawn into the hypnotic flow of the road imagery, and each time she pulls us back into the room we feel an emotional wrench, a rude awakening. Her picture has been thought out with such supple discrimination between the values of sound and image that you could almost say it's perfectly made—an ornery, glimmering achievement. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (Florence Gould Hall; Feb. 28.)

TSOTSI
In Gavin Hood's South African drama (an Oscar nominee for best foreign film), the nonactor Presley Chweneyagae plays Tsotsi, a hooded, toughened gang leader in a Johannesburg shantytown who kills for money and beats his friend for challenging his dignity. When Tsotsi shoots a woman for her car and finds that he has unwittingly absconded with her baby, he is struck with a dilemma: what to do with the baby? This would be interesting if Tsotsi's choice were not immediately clear. In a film depicting a seemingly lawless society, where women are decent and men are helpless or derelict without them, Tsotsi's painful attempts to care for an infant seem not revelatory but calculated. Curiously styled, with rap-video camera moves giving way to sensitive closeups, this reductive story of redemption milks the sentimentality, rather than the profundity, born of an extreme change of heart. In Zulu, Xhosa, and Afrikaans.—*Shauna Lyon* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



Moving Image presents a tribute to Richard Pryor, Feb. 24-26.

JEROEN KOOLHAAS

Also Playing

CAPOTE: In wide release (10/10/05). **CRASH:** Quad Cinema (5/2/05). **GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK:** In wide release (10/10/05). **THE SQUID AND THE WHALE:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas (10/24/05). **SYRIANA:** In wide release (12/5/05). **WALK THE LINE:** In wide release (11/21/05).

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"NewFilmmakers Presents." Feb. 22 at 7: Short-film program. Feb. 22 at 8:15: "Bewilderness" (2002, Zoje Stage). ♦ Special screenings. Feb. 23 at 7: "This Sporting Life" (1963, Lindsay Anderson). ♦ Feb. 25 at 4:30 and Feb. 26 at 7:30: "For Life, Against the War" (1967). ♦ Feb. 25 at 8: "Reminiscence/Reconnaissance," a short-film program. ♦ Feb. 26 at 5: "Rockaway" (2005, Mark Street). ♦ Feb. 26 at 6 and 8: "Is It Really So Strange?" (2005, William E. Jones). ♦ Red Shift Festival. Feb. 23-25. For programs and times, go to www.rsfest.com. ♦ "Essential Cinema." Feb. 24 at 8: "The Connection" (1961, Shirley Clarke). ♦ "Storefront Films." Feb. 28 at 7:30: "South East Passage," part I (2002, Ulrike Ottinger; in German).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—The Best of the African Diaspora Film Festival. Feb. 22 at 4:30: "On the Verge of a Fever" (2004, John L'Ecuyer; in French). ♦ Feb. 22 at 6:50: "Tsotsi" (†). ♦ Feb. 22 at 9:15: "Masai: The Rain Warriors" (2005, Pascal Plisson; in Masai). ♦ "Cinema Tropical." Feb. 23 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "State of Fear" (2005, Pamela Yates, Paco de Onís, and Peter Kinoy; in English and Spanish). The 6:50 show will be followed by a Q. & A. with the directors. ♦ Through March 19: The films of Hiroshi Teshigahara. Feb. 24-26 at 2:30, 4:30, 6:15, 8, and 9:40; Feb. 27 at 4:30; and Feb. 28 at 4:30, 6:15, 8, and 9:40: "Antonio Gaudí" (1984; in Japanese and Spanish). ♦ "Paul Auster's Brooklyn Follies." Feb. 27 at 7: "Smoke" (1995, Wayne Wang), followed by a Q. & A. with Auster and Jonathan Lethem.

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Premières. Feb. 22-28 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, and 10: "Sophie Scholl: The Final Days" (2005, Marc Rothemund; in German). ♦ Feb. 22-28 at 1:15, 3, 4:45, 6:30, 8:15, and 10: "Desert Wind" (2005, François Kohler; in French). ♦ In revival. Feb. 22-23 at 1:20, 3:15, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "The Fallen Idol" (1948, Carol Reed). ♦ Feb. 24-28 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Black Orpheus" (1950, Marcel Camus; in Portuguese).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"To Murder the Cinema: The Films of Marguerite Duras." Feb. 28 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "The Truck" (†). The 7:00 screening will be introduced by John Waters and followed by a discussion with Waters and Kent Jones.

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Waverly Midnights." Feb. 24-25: "Casino" (1995, Martin Scorsese). ♦ "Weekend Classics." The films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Feb. 25-26 at noon: "Fox and His Friends" (1974; in German).

ISRAEL FILM FESTIVAL
First & 62nd Cinemas (877-966-5566)—Through March 9. For additional programs, go to www.israelfilmfestival.com. Except where noted, all films are in Hebrew. Feb. 25 at 5: "Comrade" (2005; Eyal Shiray). ♦ Feb. 25 at 7:30: "Metallic Blues" (2004, Danny Verete). ♦ Feb. 25 and Feb. 28 at 9:45: "Janem, Janem" (2005, Haim Bouzaglo). ♦ Feb. 26 at 1: "Summer Story" (2005, Shmuel Peleg Haimovich). ♦ Feb. 26 at 3: "Joy" (2005, Julie Shles). ♦ Feb. 26 at 5:15: "Out of Sight" (2005, Daniel Syrkin). ♦ Feb. 26 at 7:30: "Atash (Thirst)" (2004, Tawfik Abu Wael; in Arabic). ♦ Feb. 26 at 9:45: "Love Hurts" (2005, Ram Nahari). ♦ Feb. 27 at 1: "Mimon" (2005, Emil Ben Shimon). ♦ Feb. 27 at 3: "The Last Suspect" (2005, Arik Lubetzky and Matti Harari). ♦ Feb. 27 at 5:15: "Family Matters" (2005, David Noy). ♦ Feb. 27 at 7:30: "Wolves' Moon" (2005, Shay Kanot). ♦ Feb. 27 at 9:45: "The Schwartz Dynasty" (2005, Shmuel Hasfari and Amir Hasfari). ♦ Feb. 28 at 1: "Winning with Miki" (2005, Ori Inbar). ♦ Feb. 28 at 3: "Cutting Free of Suzie" (2004, Oren Stern). ♦ Feb. 28 at 5:15: "Katzhen" (2004, Guy Michael). ♦ Feb. 28 at 7:30: "Distortion" (2004, Bouzaglo). ♦ Special screening at the Directors Guild of America, 110 W. 57th St. Feb. 28 at 9: "Now or Never" (2005, Eitan Londner).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"How Yukong Moved the Mountains." Feb. 22 at 5:45: "The Generator Factory" (1972-74, Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan). ♦ Through March 13: "Documentary Fortnight." Feb. 22 at 6: "Commune" (2005, Jonathan Berman). ♦ Feb. 22 at 8 and Feb. 26 at 3: "Rampage" (2005, George Gittoes). The Feb. 22 screening will be introduced by the director. ♦ Feb. 23 at 8 and Feb. 25 at 6:30: "New World" (2005, Paul Rosdy). The Feb. 23 screening will be introduced by the director. ♦ Feb. 24 at 8:15: "Lover Other" (2006, Barbara Hammer), introduced by the director. ♦ Feb. 25 at 4: "The Tailenders" (2005, Adele Horne), introduced by the director. ♦ Feb. 25 at 8:15: "Sentenced Home" (2005, David Grabias and Nicole Newnham) and "Rosevelt's America" (2005, Roger Weisberg and Tod Lending), both introduced by the directors. ♦ Feb. 26 at 5:30: "Traffic" (2005, Perry Bard) and "The Ballad of Greenwich Village" (2005, Karen Kramer), both introduced by the directors. ♦ "Asian Cinevisions." Feb. 22 at 8:15 and Feb. 23 at

6: “Rewind” (2003, Kim Hak-Soon; in Korean). ♦ Through March 5: Recent French animation. All films are in French. Feb. 23 at 6:30 and Feb. 25 at 3:45: “Kirikou and the Wild Beasts” (2005, Michel Ocelot). The Feb. 23 screening will be introduced by the director. ♦ Feb. 23 at 8:15 and Feb. 25 at 2: “Kirikou and the Sorceress” (1998, Ocelot). The Feb. 23 screening will be introduced by the director. ♦ Feb. 24 at 6:30 and Feb. 27 at 8:30: “The Frog Prophecy” (2003, Jacques-Rémy Girerd). ♦ Feb. 24 at 8:15: “The Triplets of Belleville” (2003, Sylvain Chomet). ♦ Feb. 25 at 5:45: “La Table Tournante” (1988, Jacques Demy and Paul Grimault). ♦ Feb. 25 at 7:30: “The King and the Mockingbird” (1979, Grimault). ♦ Feb. 26 at 5:30 and Feb. 27 at 6: “The Island of Black Mor” (2004, Jean-François Laguionie). ♦ “Alexander Hammid: A Memorial Salute.” Feb. 24 at 6:30 and Feb. 25 at 2: A program of short films by Hammid, including “Valley of the Tennessee” (1944), “The Private Life of a Cat” (1946), “The Gentleman in Room 6” (1951), and “To Be Alive!” (1966, Hammid and Francis Thompson). ♦ “MediaScope.” Feb. 27 at 8:30: Short films by Ricardo Nicolayevsky.

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—The films of Wallace & Gromit. Feb. 22-24 at 1:30: “The Curse of the Were-Rabbit” (2005, Steve Box and Nick Park). ♦ The films of Josephine Baker. Feb. 22-24 at 3: “La Revue des Revues” (1927, Joe Francis; silent). ♦ Feb. 25 at 2: “Siren of the Tropics” (1927, Mario Nalpas and Henri Étiévant; silent). ♦ Feb. 25-26 at 4:30: “Princess Tam Tam” (†). ♦ Feb. 26 at 2: “Zouzou” (1934, Marc Allégret; in French). ♦ A tribute to Richard Pryor. Feb. 24 at 7:30: A panel discussion with Lonette McKee, Paul Mooney, and Mel Watkins. ♦ Feb. 25 at 6:30: “Which Way Is Up?” (1977, Michael Schulz), introduced by McKee. ♦ Feb. 26 at 6:30: Highlights from “The Richard Pryor Show,” introduced by Mooney.

PIONEER THEATRE

155 E. 3rd St. (212-591-0434)—In revival. Feb. 22 at 7:15: “The Evil Dead” (1982, Sam Raimi). ♦ Feb. 23 at 6:30: “Picnic at Hanging Rock” (1975, Peter Weir). ♦ Feb. 24 at 11: “Dr. Strangelove” (1964, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Feb. 25 at 11: “New York Doll” (2005, Greg Whiteley). ♦ Premières. Feb. 22-28 at 9: “Love” (2005, Vladan Nikolić). ♦ Feb. 25 at 7: “NY (See)” (2005, Lili White). ♦ Feb. 26 at 7: Short films by Jacob Strunk. ♦ “Bizarro Mondays.” Feb. 27 at 7: “KatieBird *Certifiable Crazy Person” (2004, Justin Paul Ritter). ♦ “Cinewoman NY Presents.” Feb. 28 at 7: Short-film program.

SUNSHINE CINEMA

143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—“Sunshine@Midnight.” Feb. 24-25: “Spooktacular!,” featuring “Night of the Living Dead” (1968, George Romero).

THALIA THEATRE

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—“Just Kidding!” Feb. 25 at 11 A.M.: “Mary Poppins” (1964, Robert Stevenson). ♦ In revival. Feb. 26 at 7 and Feb. 28 at 6: “Nights of Cabiria” (1957, Federico Fellini; in Italian).

WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—“*Film Comment* Selects.” Feb. 22 at 1 and 9:30: “Bashing” (2005, Masahiro Kobayashi; in Japanese). ♦ Feb. 22 at 2:45: “Kinetta” (2005, Yorgos Lanthimos; in Greek). ♦ Feb. 22 at 4:45 and Feb. 24 at 1: “Saratan” (2005, Ernest Abdyshaparov; in Kyrgyz). ♦ Feb. 22 at 7, Feb. 24 at 5:20, and Feb. 25 at 9: “Loft” (2005, Kiyoshi Kurosawa; in Japanese). ♦ Feb. 23 at 2:30: “Days in the Country” (2004, Raúl Ruiz; in Spanish). ♦ Feb. 23 at 4:30 and Feb. 24 at 9:45: Short films by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Shinya Tsukamoto, and Song Il-gon. ♦ Feb. 24 at 3:10 and 7:35: “The Forsaken Land” (2005, Vimukthi Jayasundara; in Sinhala). ♦ Feb. 25 at 7: “Kekexili: Mountain Patrol” (2004, Lu Chuan; in Mandarin and Tibetan). ♦ The films of Elaine May. Feb. 25 at 2 and Feb. 28 at 1: “A New Leaf” (1971). ♦ Feb. 25 at 4:15 and Feb. 26 at 1: “The Heartbreak Kid” (†). ♦ Feb. 26 and Feb. 28 at 3:15: “Mikey and Nicky” (1976). ♦ “An Evening with Elaine May.” Feb. 26 at 7: “Ishtar” (1987), followed by a conversation between May and Mike Nichols. For tickets, go to www.filmlinc.com.

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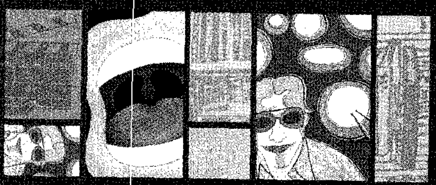

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Tickets for each event are free and can be reserved one week in advance of the event date. Please visit cuarts.com or newyorker.com for more information.

READINGS AND TALKS

PETE'S CANDY STORE
The novelist David Amsden and Ben Greenman, an editor at this magazine, read from their contributions to "Stumbling and Raging: More Politically Inspired Fiction." (709 Lorimer St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-302-3770. Feb. 23 at 7:30.)

POETRY SOCIETY OF AMERICA
The society offers a night of Asian-American poetry dedicated to the singer, activist, and law professor Chris Iijima, who died at the end of last year. Meena Alexander, Marilyn Chin, Luis Francia, Eric Gamalinda, Kimiko Hahn, Vijay Seshadri, Barbara Tran, Shanxing Wang, and Arthur Sze are expected. (Wollman Hall, the New School, 65 W. 11th St. For more information, call 212-254-9628. Feb. 23 at 7:30.)

"THE POLITICS OF RECONSTRUCTION"
The academics David W. Blight (director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, at Yale University), Michael Eric Dyson (a humanities professor at the University of Pennsylvania), Eric Foner (history, Columbia), and Patricia Williams (law, Columbia) talk about race and class in the South, from the Emancipation to Hurricane Katrina. (Graduate Center, City University of New York, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. No tickets necessary. Feb. 27 at 7:30.)

"THEATRE OF IDEAS"
Camille Paglia, whose latest book is "Break, Blow, Burn: Camille Paglia Reads Forty-Three of the World's Best Poems," talks about the political and cultural impact of poetry with Bill Goldstein, the curator of this series at Columbia University's Miller Theatre. (Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Feb. 27 at 8.)

A TRIBUTE TO JAMES MERRILL
A new edition of Merrill's epic "The Changing Light at Sandover" is out, and on Feb. 28 at 6:30, just three days shy of what would have been his eightieth birthday, Deborah Garrison, David Lehman, J. D. McClatchy, and Robert Polito honor the late poet. (Wollman Hall, the New School, 65 W. 11th St. Tickets at the door.)

JOHN WATERS
On Tuesdays since January, the French Institute Alliance Française has been screening the films of Marguerite Duras. The final show features an appearance by the director John Waters, who will introduce Duras's 1977 film, "Le Camion" ("The Truck"), and who will then discuss his obsession with the late French writer and director. (See Movies.) (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 212-355-6160. Feb. 28 at 7.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"POLITICS, POLEMIC, AND PILLS"
Some aging rockers have children, gaze into their eyes, and start turning out friendly fare that gives them a second career. Ed Hamell, a tough-skinned middle-aged punk poet who performs as Hamell on Trial, recently looked at his infant son and came up with the album "Songs for Parents Who Enjoy Drugs." It starts with a hilarious track, "Inquiring Minds," that gives straightforward advice about how to explain a colorful past to your child: lie. The rest of it continues in language suitable only for adults as it pokes needed fun at parenting today. He elaborates on the album during an anecdote-filled one-man show at the Knitting Factory starting this week. (74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. 212-219-3055. Feb. 21-23 and March 2-4 at 8.)

GREENWICH VILLAGE ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR
Some seventy dealers from up and down the East Coast display their first editions, maps, prints, and paper ephemera for the benefit of students at P.S. 3. (490 Hudson St., between Christopher and Grove Sts. Feb. 24 from 6 to 10, Feb. 25 from noon to 6, and Feb. 26 from noon to 5. For more information, visit www.gvabf.org.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
Impressionist art lost its frisson long ago, but its tasteful, bourgeois pleasures, in full flower at **Sotheby's** midseason sale of Impressionist and modern art on Feb. 23, can be hard to resist—as in Jean Dufy's "Promenade près du Bois de Boulogne," in which a green cyclist and pastel-blue pedestrians drift by a pink Parisian Beaux-Arts façade. On Feb. 28, the Metropolitan Museum is selling off more than two hundred plaster casts of classical, Gothic, and Renaissance sculpture and architectural fragments, which stood in what is now the Medieval Sculpture Hall in the days before the museum could afford the real thing. Since the sale is offered without reserve, it may be possible to take home two horses from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia for a less-than-Olympian price. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ Seventy exhibitors, five days: **"The Art Show"** (Feb. 23-27) brings its yearly carnival to town, with some of the country's top galleries presenting works by major modern and contemporary artists. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67th St. 212-940-8925.) ♦ Among the many intriguing items at **Swann's** auction of printed and manuscript African-Americana (Feb. 28) is a first edition of "What Mrs. Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking," reportedly the first cookbook by a black American writer. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

JOSH COCHRAN

ON THE HORIZON

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OTHER VOICES
March 8-9

Zankel Hall hosts two wildly divergent vocal concerts: an evening of Britten Canticles, featuring the tenor Ian Bostridge, and a multimedia concert with the avant-garde cellist Maya Beiser and the mezzo-soprano Alexandra Montano. (212-247-7800.)

MOVIES
THE CONNECTION
March 10-19

Fuelled by the lasting influence of the New Wave, the French cinema continues to thrive and to surprise, as seen in this survey of new French films at the Walter Reade Theatre, which includes "Good Girl," by Sophie Fillières, a febrile comedy about a woman's mishaps, and "I Saw Ben Barka Get Killed," a docudrama by Serge Le Péron that illuminates the bizarre political scandal of 1965-66. (www.filmlinc.com; 212-875-5600.)

THE THEATRE
THREE CENTS
March 24

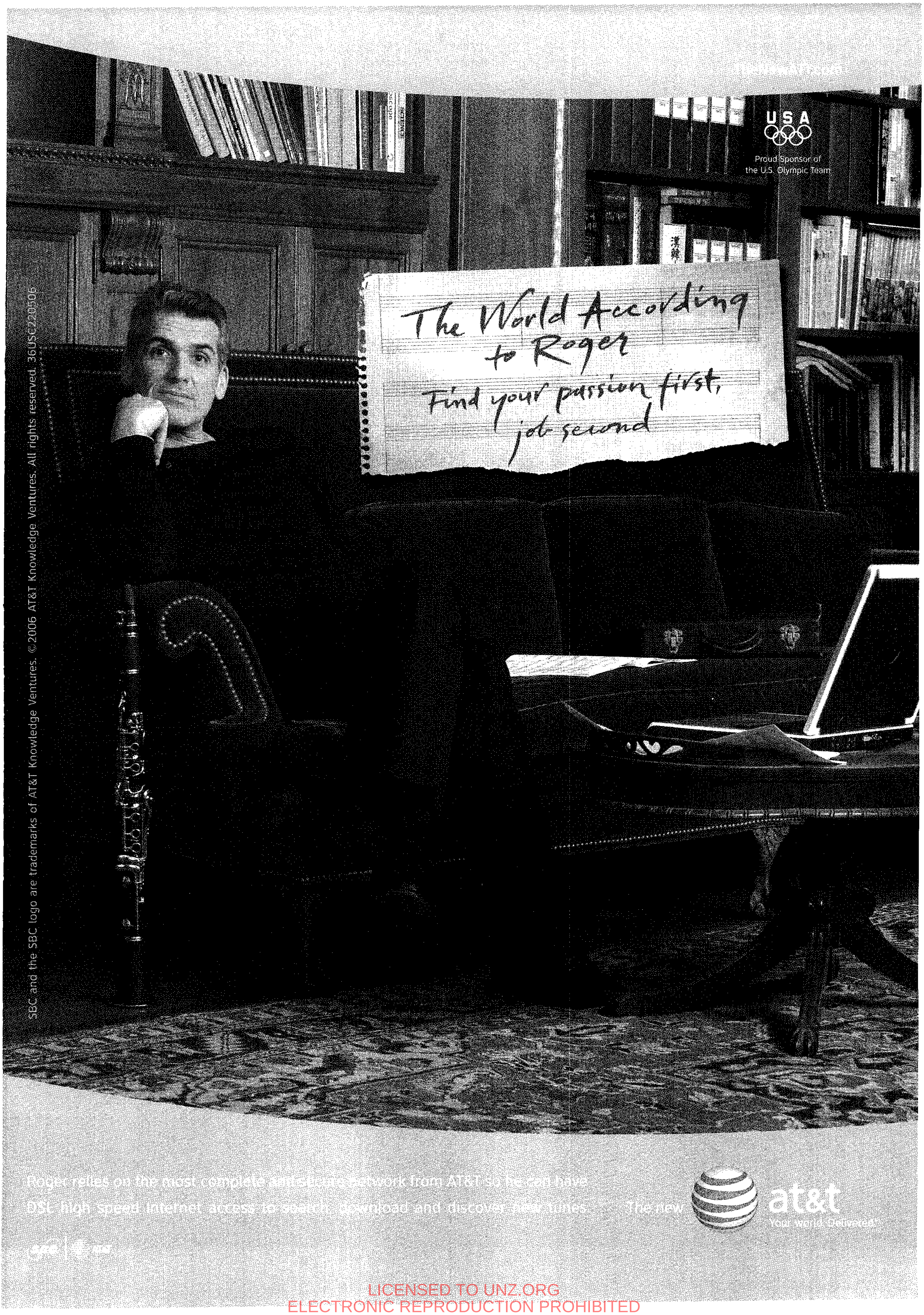
Alan Cumming, Cyndi Lauper, and Nellie McKay headline the Roundabout Theatre Company's Broadway revival of "The Threepenny Opera," Bertolt Brecht's classic 1928 satire. Scott Elliott directs. (212-719-1300.)

ART
ALL HAIL THE QUEEN
March 28-July 9

Centuries before Cleopatra, the Egyptian royal Hatshepsut had herself crowned pharaoh and adopted the traditional false beard worn by kings while serving as regent for (and later co-ruler with) her nephew, Thutmose III. Her reign (ca. 1479-1458 B.C.) was largely devoted to the expansion of trade corridors in Africa and Asia and to the restoration of temples; the Met's exhibition will present statuary, jewelry, and furniture. (212-535-7710.)

NIGHT LIFE
MINIMAL JOYS
April 11

The British singer Beth Orton built her career with albums of folksy electronica. Her new release, "Comfort of Strangers," strips away many of the technological trappings, putting the intricate rawness of her voice front and center. She'll appear at Webster Hall. (212-353-1600.)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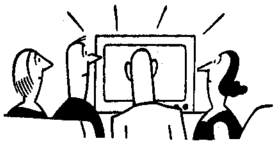
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
IMAGES



Last week, with Muslims rioting, and dying, because of twelve cartoons about the Prophet published in a Copenhagen newspaper nearly five months earlier, Italy's blithely oblivious Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, compared himself (and not for the first time) to Jesus. "I am the Jesus Christ of politics, a patient victim," he announced to a roomful of Italian moguls. "I put up with everything." He might have said "Muhammad," since, after the riots stop and the boycotts against Denmark fizzle, the patient victim of the Danish cartoon crisis will certainly be the Prophet, put to mockery by the West and to another round of violent political uses by his own people.

By now, the story behind the crisis is fairly clear, although the questions it raises about the claims of literalism and liberalism on a global village of angry neighbors are far from settled. But it is also clear that there are many ways to tell that story, and many moments at which it could be said to properly begin. You could start with the Koran—for Muslims, the words of Allah dictated to Muhammad. The Koran says that there can be "nothing like a likeness" of God, but in fact it makes no reference to images of the prophet to whom the interdiction was revealed. (It is the Hadith, Islam's early narrative, that forbids the faithful to represent him.) And, as Islam spread to Persia and India, civilizations with strong representational traditions, artists did paint him, and the faithful used those paintings in ecstatic devotions. As late as the nineteenth century, Persians were still producing *pardehs*—huge storytelling canvases—depicting the battle of Karbala and as often as not ending with an image of the Prophet on his horse, his face now hidden by a cloth, ascending to Heaven.

Or you could start the story in 1989, with the fatwa against Salman Rushdie, or with the murder of the filmmaker Theo van Gogh, in Holland, in the fall of 2004, because those were the first important contemporary instances of Islamist threats against free speech in the secular democracies of the West. Or you could start the story where it officially began, in Denmark, in the summer of 2005, when a children's-book writer looking for an illustrator to collaborate on a book about Islam for Danish schoolchildren was turned down by everyone he asked, on the ground that the project was too "dangerous." By September, his problem had made its way into the liberal Copenhagen daily *Politiken*, and was promptly co-opted by the conservative daily *Jyllands-Posten*, whose arts editor—now on "indefinite leave"—asked forty artists to "test the limits of expression" by drawing pictures of Muhammad. Twelve did. The exercise was insensitive, provocative, and arguably imprudent, if for no other reason than that Denmark had spent considerable time and patience on courting Middle Eastern markets. (It stands to lose $1.6 billion in export revenues this year, and one Danish company is already losing $1.7 million a day.) But there was never much argument at home about the newspaper's right to publish the cartoons.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Nor was there any real violence on the part of the two hundred thousand Muslims who live in Denmark; a few thousand demonstrated peacefully in October to protest the cartoons, and some groups filed a criminal complaint against the paper in a local court. There was not even much of a reaction in the Muslim world, which got its first look at the cartoons in mid-October, when *Al*

Fagr, an Egyptian paper, reprinted six of them, one on its front page. Eleven Muslim ambassadors to Denmark did request a meeting with the ordinarily outspoken, conservative Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, but they were turned down, and most people in Denmark, perhaps even the ambassadors, assumed that was the end of it.

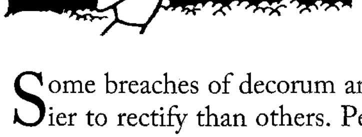
Moderate Danish Muslims allowed that the cartoons were offensive to them—offensive and bland. But many also allowed that the two "most offensive"—the Prophet with a bomb nesting in his turban; the Prophet on a cloud, calling out to a line of suicide bombers, "Stop, stop, we're running out of virgins"—could be read as comments on the manipulation of the faithful by the kind of extremists they themselves had every reason to fear. They were right. In December, a radical imam from one of Copenhagen's outlying mosques put together a forty-three-page scrapbook of caricatures involving the Prophet (including the twelve cartoons and a couple of images that were, by anyone's standards, vicious), and sent it off to Egypt, where it began an agitprop tour of the Middle East. A month later, *Magazinet*, a small Norwegian paper close to the Christian right, reprinted the Danish cartoons. After that, the story became the crisis. Ten thousand Muslims demonstrated in Gaza, then twenty thousand in Lebanon, then more than a hundred thousand in Pakistan. The demonstrations became riots, and more than thirty people have died.

There are twenty-five million Muslims—immigrant workers, their wives, children, and grandchildren—in Western Europe. Most of the original workers were recruited as migrant labor in the boom years of the nineteen-sixties. They were barely welcomed beyond the cheerfully forced ministrations of church groups and social workers, but in most places the assumption was that, after a couple of generations, some sort of assimilation would be inevitable. It was a realistic assumption, but reality changed. An oil crisis happened, unemployment happened, September 11th happened, the war in Iraq happened, and the anti-immigrant backlash—once the province of Europe's orthodox Communists and its far right—became an undercurrent of liberal opinion. Most important, the Internet revolution happened, and, with it, jihadist recruitment began in earnest, telling a new generation of European Muslims that the only true assimilation was to militant Islam. That generation became the flashpoint of a battle that had little to do with its members' lives, or with their very real grievances. It had to do with the Muslim power struggle in the Gulf, and the stakes were not only oil but control over the Islamic diaspora, or what you could call international Islam. It was clear to everyone involved that if the diaspora in Europe produced a modern, critical, democratic Islam, the Islamist regimes of the Middle East would begin to fall.

More than twenty-five European newspapers and magazines (and only a few major American ones) have reprinted some or all of the cartoons, arguing that people had the right to "see" what the riots and the threats and the blackmail were all about (and did not, as the *Times* suggested, have to accept that written descriptions were sufficient). Call it the right to pursue the news without turning that pursuit into the sort of clandestine adventure it is in so much of the Middle East. It may be that the myths of a multicultural Europe have been shattered by the Danish cartoons, not because of any "clash of civilizations" but because, in the end, while democracies recognize religious faith, and sometimes practice it, they survive only by their faith in themselves. Democracies preclude contending absolutisms and the dicta of fixed identities. They have to do with identity in flux, with culture, and cultures, constantly transforming, molting into something new—something surprising and different and open-ended and free.

—*Jane Kramer*

GOOD FORM DEPT.
REGRETFULLY, DICK



Some breaches of decorum are easier to rectify than others. Perhaps you have been invited to attend a memorial ceremony at Auschwitz and you arrive in a parka and hiking boots, only to find that most of the men are wearing dark suits. Solution: Buy an overcoat and, next time, call ahead to ask about attire. Or, say, you lose your temper and tell a senior member of the United States Senate to "go fuck yourself." Solution: Issue a statement acknowledging your frank words and let the fuss subside without attracting further attention. Vice-President Dick Cheney carried himself successfully through both of these faux pas. But his accidental shooting of the Austin lawyer Harry M. Whittington presents a more delicate question of etiquette: What is the proper way to proceed after blasting six to two hundred pieces of birdshot into the chest, neck, and face of a personal acquaintance? Mylar balloons? African violets? A casserole?

Dick Cheney

On this point of protocol, even the experts are indistinct. "Coveys and Singles: The Handbook of Quail Hunting," for instance, focusses on such subjects as apparel. "The quail hunter's underwear can vary. . . ," its author, Bob Gooch, writes. "Some hunters prefer fishnet-type underwear which permits the body heat to circulate more freely." The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's skills manual details elaborate chivalric rites with regard to everything from field manners ("Don't be a slob or a poacher!" "Never be rude or hog shots") to the conveyance of quarry ("Be discreet and respectful of the animal as you transport it home. Never make the carcass and head the subject of public display"), but is less exacting when it comes to how to behave if what you've shot is, in fact, a human being. Only the following mores can be established: The ethical hunter's first obligation is to determine responsiveness in the injured party. After shouting, "Are you all right?" he must check for hemorrhaging. Finally, he is expected to determine, "Is there blood-soaked clothing? Are there pools of blood on the ground?"

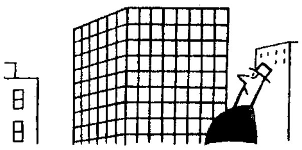
The literature offers few clues to how an errant marksman should negotiate what Dickens calls "the delicacy of his situation." (In Chapter 7 of "The Pickwick Papers," Mr. Tupman, during a rook shoot, "had saved the lives of innumerable unoffending birds by receiving a portion of the charge in his left arm.") In Jimmy Carter's "An Outdoor Journal," his ode to the role of fresh air in forging gentlemanly virtue, he hints at the predicament of the friend-shooter, a sort of shadowy social limbo, fraught with shame and imputations of poor couth. According to Carter, "If anyone grew careless and endangered a neighbor by shooting too low, it was a serious matter indeed, warranting an angry shout of condemnation and a damaged reputation." Grover Cleveland, in "Fishing and Shooting Sketches," concurs. "The careless or bungling shooter," he writes, must not be surprised if even his dog abandons him, "leaving the chagrined and disappointed hunter to return home alone—legs weary, gameless and ashamed."

The 1969 edition of "Vogue's Book of Etiquette" includes a long discussion of "Hunting and Shooting" (don't reach for shots, offer all game to your host), but makes no mention of how to behave in the case of shooting someone in the face. "Letters of Apology and Complaint" offers only this: "A short, sincere note . . . enclosed in a box of flowers, may help one's cause." "Debrett's," which acknowledges that the country weekend can be a "social minefield," is exhaustive but severe. "Being dangerous is considered frightfully rude. . . . Shooting manners expect the guilty gun to leave the party immediately . . . and if the mishap is a tragic one . . . never to shoot again. Shooting form also expects the other guns to be deeply discreet about the incident." The Vice-President's instincts on this last point have been impeccable.

Notwithstanding the antics of the misfiring narrator of Tom Lehrer's "The Hunting Song"—he taxidermies the heads of "two game wardens, seven hunters, and a pure-bred Guernsey cow"—surely it is inadvisable for the shooter to present himself, as Cheney did, at the next day's quail lunch. So how *do* you make it up to the fellow you mistook for a bobwhite? In the view of Peter Post, the director of the Emily Post Institute and the author of "Essential Manners for Men," the key is to acknowledge the misstep and then make active attempts at redress. Chocolates aren't quite right for the occasion, but the Vice-President would be safe with flowers. "A springtime mix," Post said. "That would bring a bit of joy to a drab hospital room."

—*Lauren Collins*

BACKSTORY
NEW MAN



At 9 A.M. on July 3, 2003, Doug Bruce woke up on the F train near Coney Island. He had no idea who or where he was. There was a swimsuit in his knapsack, but it was cool and rainy out. He knew what cars were, but he could not identify specific hood ornaments; he could sign his name—a left-handed scrawl—but he was able to decipher only the "D." His scalp was covered with bumps and cuts, and he had a pounding headache. Two days later, recalling that morning, he wrote, "I go to a shop and buy some water. I'm cold and wet. I'm afraid I have committed a crime." Bruce was suffering from a rare condition known as total retrograde amnesia. All his memories had vanished, and his syntax seemed stuck in the present tense.

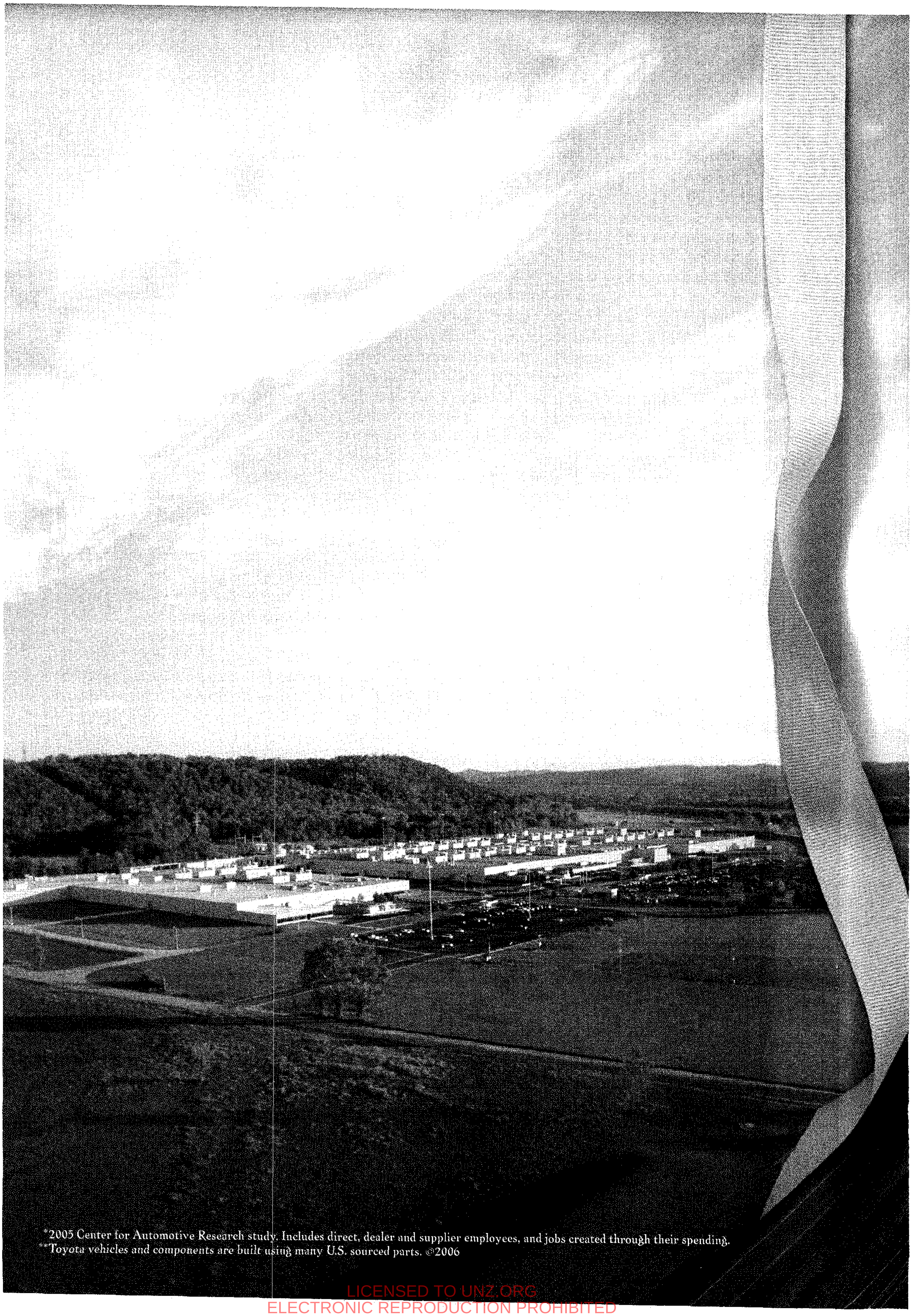
Eventually, a Coney Island policeman determined that the polite, terrified stranger with the British accent was Doug Bruce, a thirty-five-year-old resident of Greenwich Village. An unfamiliar friend took Bruce home to his equally unfamiliar loft, and he began trying to relearn who he was. A well-travelled stockbroker who had quit a few years earlier to pursue photography, Bruce discovered that procedural skills, such as handling a camera and surfing, came back readily; the rest remained a void. When an English friend e-mailed that he wanted to help Bruce regain his love for West Indian cricket, Bruce replied, "Is it a drink, or some kind of insect?" And, inquire as he might, he could find no one who knew what had happened to him that July 2nd.

Bruce's ordeal is the subject of a documentary made by an old friend, "Unknown White Male," which opens this week. One afternoon recently, Bruce sat at a pub on West Thirty-third Street, warming his hands around a cup of tea. An inquisitive, sweet-tempered man with wide green eyes, he never stopped smiling. Across the street was the Empire State Building, the next stop on his whirlwind tour of everything. In the past two and a half years, he has experienced the novel joys of blueberries, fireworks, the ocean, and Fellini's "8½," which he saw twice in a row. On his first flight, to Paris, he stayed up all night watching the tiny airplane symbol on his seat-back video screen cross the Atlantic.

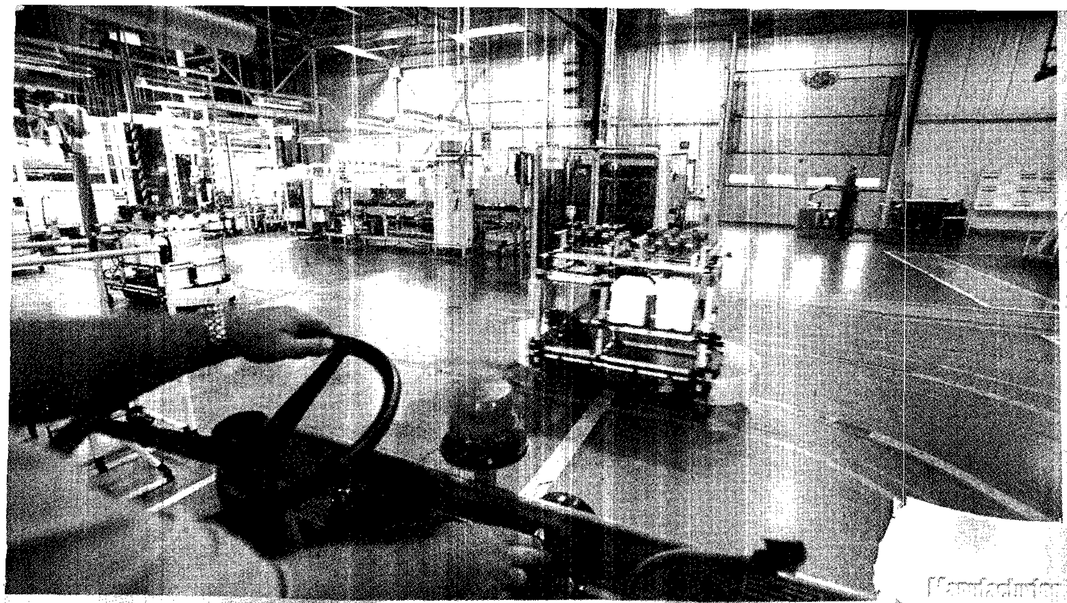
"I just found out today about 'Miami Vice'—do you know what that is?" he asked. "Apparently, in the eighties it was the show that defined how men should dress, although some people thought it was super-cheesy." Sounds about right. "Since the accident, I feel a childlike—or what I imagine to be a childlike—wonder at new experiences, but also an analytical understanding," he said. "When I first held snow, it was about both the feeling of the crystals in my hand and my understanding of the molecular structure." He laughed, and toyed with the silver butterfly-wing charm around his neck, a gift from his girlfriend of nearly two years, Narelle. "And I feel very privileged to have experienced, as an adult, falling in love for the first time, the way a teen-ager probably would."

In the film, Bruce's friends observe that he's much more open now. "There was a real guarded Englishness in me before," he said. "People tell me I didn't show any emotion when my mother died." She succumbed to breast cancer when he was twenty-three. His first morning home after losing his memory, he woke up and asked, "Where's my mother?"

Bruce is hoping that memories of his



*2005 Center for Automotive Research study. Includes direct, dealer and supplier employees, and jobs created through their spending.
**Toyota vehicles and components are built using many U.S. sourced parts. ©2006



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Manufacturing Facilities

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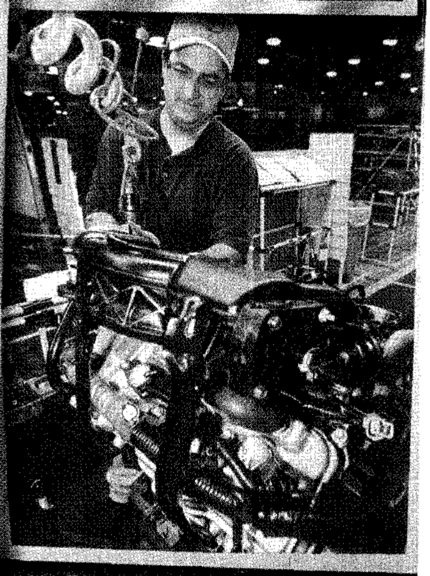

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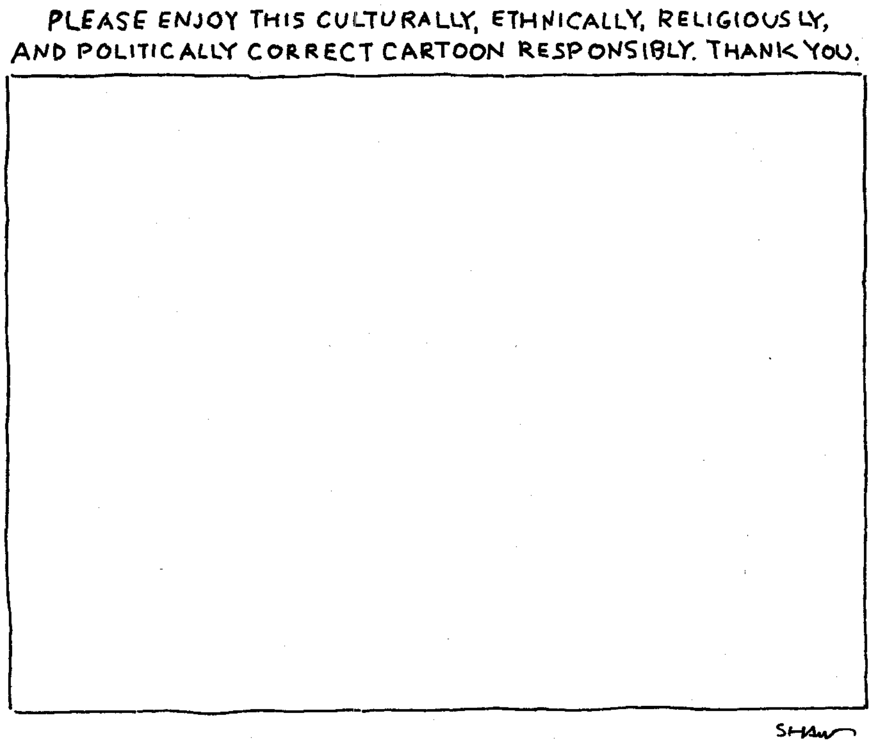

PLEASE ENJOY THIS CULTURALLY, ETHNICALLY, RELIGIOUSLY, AND POLITICALLY CORRECT CARTOON RESPONSIBLY. THANK YOU.

mother, and of everything else, will return, as his doctors have predicted that they will. (The doctors have found no neurological cause for the amnesia and believe that it may have resulted from an unknown psychic trauma—an indeterminacy that has led some people, including Michel Gondry, the director of "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," to suggest that Bruce is faking his condition.) But the prospect of remembering also makes him uneasy: "What happens? Do the two people together create one person?" Narelle has worried that a new Doug—Doug 3.0—might be a different person, a person who doesn't love her. And, she wonders, if he recovers his connection to his childhood in Nigeria, his youth in England, and his early adulthood in France, will he still be happy in New York?

Bruce's apartment looks out on the Empire State Building's southern face, and he wanted to go up to the observation deck. As he walked slowly through the building's lobby, he said, "I love all these rays, the Art Deco. It is Art Deco, isn't it?" On the eighty-sixth floor, he looked around, shouted "There it is!," and ran toward the south railing. He pressed his face against the metal palings and gazed out at the vast, quiet city at sunset. "It's unbelievable," he said. "I consider"—his voice broke—"I consider this my home." After a moment, he continued, "The light is amazing, magical—the clarity of its reflections, the way it ripples and fades. Every little window gains importance! The bridge out there"—he pointed to the Verrazano—"and the Statue of Liberty, and New Jersey, and then all of America beyond. Everything makes sense from up here. The continuity of personal history, there's so much—" He broke off again, his eyes shining. "I just want to hug it."

—*Tad Friend*

WEATHER PERMITTING
GO, DOG, GO!

A couple of years ago, on a snowy December weekend in Chicago, Liz Hansen slipped and broke an ankle while crossing the street. She was on her way to a dog show, where she'd planned to enter her standard schnauzer, Seasar. She told the orthopedist, "This foot has to be functional by the second Monday in February, because I *will* show my dog at Westminster." It was, she did, and Seasar won the Westminster Kennel Club's best-of-breed distinction.

Last Monday, the second this February, Hansen slipped on her way up the snowy steps to Madison Square Garden and broke a wrist. She pleaded with the emergency staff at St. Vincent's to hurry up: she was due to show Seasar at Westminster, again, in a matter of hours. They gave her a temporary cast and some painkillers, and she hustled back to the Garden in time to make some final trims to Seasar's fur with her good hand before leading him into the ring. Once more, he was judged the top schnauzer.

"The judge did ask me to show the dog's bite, and you need two hands to do that," Hansen conceded afterward. "I said, 'I can't.' So she had to do it herself."

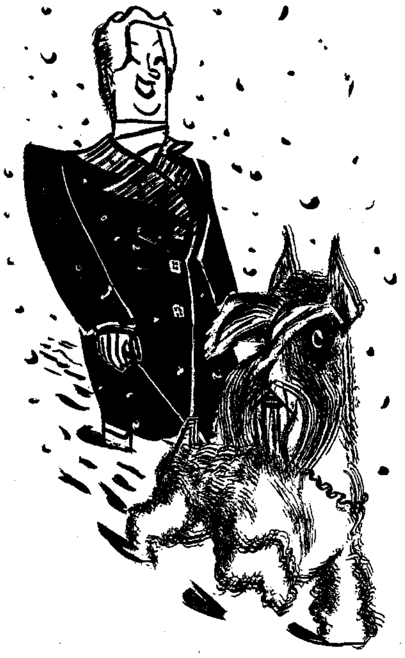
The "Blizzard of 2006," as the latest northeaster had come to be known by the start of the week, may have dumped more snow—twenty-seven inches, or enough to bury Seasar, standing—than any previous storm in these parts, but the coinciding occasion of Westminster's annual exhibition afforded an opportunity to assess the blizzard in a broader historical context, according to the standards of an unusually intrepid lot: dog people. And, by dog-people standards, this last storm was fairly ordinary.

"We're a bunch of crazies," Amanda Quinlan, who is from Georgia, said, standing backstage beside her sleeping wirehaired dachshund, Joey. "It has to be Category 3 or higher for dog shows to stop."

Quinlan flew in on Saturday, just before the storm. The following morning, with the snow falling fast, she made the mistake of trying to switch hotels. For five and a half blocks, she forged a path through unshovelled powder, dragging more than a hundred pounds of luggage behind her. "I had my dog in his cage, I had this luggage case that you could fit a dead body in, I had a carry-on, and my dog had a carry-on," she said. "New Yorkers were laughing at me."

Still, it beat her experience trying to reach Chattanooga for a show in 1993. "That year, a blizzard hit the Southeast, and it had me trapped on I-75, on the side of the road, in the snow," she said. "All these people were out walking their dogs on the sides of highways, and they actually cancelled. And they just don't cancel dog shows."

Joey, the dachshund, who is three, had never seen snow before last week, so Quinlan outfitted him with a plaid wool coat, and eventually turned him loose on Broadway to play—whereupon he vanished in the white mounds, his ears surfacing only in mid-jump. The snow was fresh enough that she didn't worry too much about his paws getting burned by the street salt. "It can be a problem, particularly with Southern dogs," she explained. "I've had dogs come up lame at shows in Cleveland. Like in 2004, I brought a Dane, and because of all the salt he was limping the whole weekend."



Liz Hansen and Seasar

Anne Evans, who is from Ohio, made sure to point out the boots and the purple tracksuit she'd brought along for Michelangelo, her Afghan hound, who was sleeping in an enormous cage. "I wish I could get in there with him," she said. "He's got more room than we do out here." She's been attending dog shows since 1969, along with her friend Shery, who'd flown from Michigan to root for Michelangelo. Cleveland is a memorable spot for them, too. "We all got to sleep inside the Cleveland Convention Center one year," Shery said. "We were snowed in. You could not get out of the center city. People were sleeping on grooming tables."

—*Ben McGrath*

DEPT. OF PRECOCITY

ARTISTS IN THEIR YOUTH

"School Days," a new group exhibition featuring the work of nineteen graduate art students at Hunter, Columbia, and Yale, definitely qualifies as an art-world event. Granted, the frenzied search for new talent has had dealers and collectors invading college campuses for several years now, but here was the next generation invading Manhattan, and not in some makeshift Tribeca garage but at the Tilton Gallery, on East Seventy-sixth Street, on two floors of the grand town house where Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt were married. The opening was packed with young people in festive getups, many of them holding cold bottles of Rolling Rock and displaying masterful tattoos. Janine Cirincione, the gallery's director, looked elated and a trifle stunned. "Mike Ovitz was in yesterday and bought two paintings," she told me, straining to be heard above the din. "About seventy per cent of the work is sold. I don't really know what to make of this."

The art on the walls didn't look like student work. The paintings ranged in size from large to very large, with figurative images outweighing abstract ones by a wide margin: a lot of visionary landscapes and enigmatic narrative scenes. There was one smallish sculpture, surprisingly little photo-based work—the notable exception being a giant, two-panel color blowup of the much abused call buttons in an elevator in Novgorod, Russia—and only two video pieces. What passes for college humor these days was limited to a realist painting called "Yale, Bad Idea," which showed a middle-aged guy in a Yale sweatshirt shielding his eyes from the sun. The work all looked very *accomplished*. No amateurish pratfalls here, nor any big risks taken.

"It's a challenge for me to be in these surroundings," said Titus Kaphar, a merry-looking Yale student wearing a yellow sweater, a vest, a very short necktie, and a tweed cap. "A lot of insecurity. You do what you do and hope somebody, somewhere—you know."

"Everything I have here is on hold," Kianja Strobert, a Yale student in a chic black dress, said. "It's pretty exciting."

Natalie Frank, the only Columbia student in the group, was happy to explain her vast allegorical canvas, which is six feet eight inches tall by ten feet four inches wide. "It's called 'War,' and it's a battlefield, and somewhere between theatrical and realistic narrative," she said. "It's about the thwarted ability to actually fight for something, or to be engaged completely in something. Sort of the futility of the whole thing." Frank currently has a solo show, her first, at the Briggs Robinson Gallery, in Chelsea, and she is not worried that early success may pose a threat to her artistic development. "I started taking drawing classes three times a week when I was ten," she said. "This has been my goal for some time. I feel ready."

A lot of artists in the tottering stages of forty-and-over might be horrified by the show. Chuck Close, who graduated from Yale's School of Art in 1964, said the other day that none of his classmates would have dreamed of showing the work they did in art school; the freedom to experiment, to try new approaches without fear of failing, was essential to finding their own way, he felt. But Deborah Kass, a visiting artist-teacher at Yale, did not seem concerned. "A lot of these people are really good artists, and you just get out of their way," she said.

Jack Tilton hove into view, a youthful-looking man in an open-collared white shirt. Asked about the perils to young artists of showing so early, he said, "We're thinking of doing a think-tank session here in the gallery. Get a diverse group of older and younger people, give them a good dinner, and talk about this. If you have a strong enough philosophical base you're not going to get knocked off your feet by greed and capitalism." He continued, "You have to act more as a muse. You're not forcing capitalism down their throats. It's more, let's get together."

—*Calvin Tomkins*

CELEBRATE THE CITY

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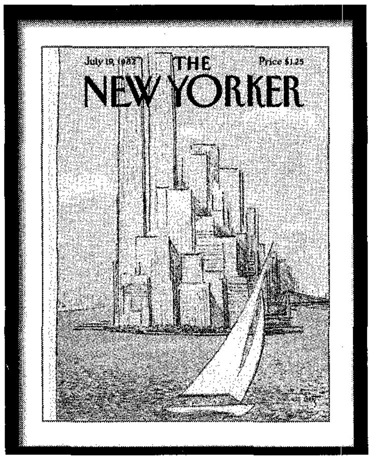

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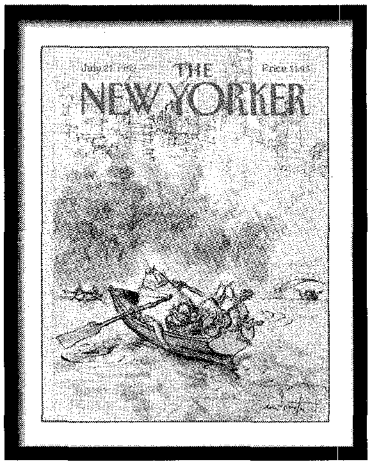

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ANNALS OF THE PENTAGON

THE MEMO

How an internal effort to ban the abuse and torture of detainees was thwarted.

BY JANE MAYER

One night this January, in a ceremony at the Officers' Club at Fort Myer, in Arlington, Virginia, which sits on a hill with a commanding view across the Potomac River to the Washington Monument, Alberto J. Mora, the outgoing general counsel of the United States Navy, stood next to a podium in the club's ballroom. A handsome gray-haired man in his mid-fifties, he listened with a mixture of embarrassment and pride as his colleagues toasted his impending departure. Amid the usual tributes were some more pointed comments.

"Never has there been a counsel with more intellectual courage or personal integrity," David Brant, the former head of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, said. Brant added somewhat cryptically, "He surprised us into doing the right thing." Conspicuous for his silence that night was Mora's boss, William J. Haynes II, the general counsel of the Department of Defense.

Back in Haynes's office, on the third floor of the Pentagon, there was a stack of papers chronicling a private battle that Mora had waged against Haynes and other top Administration officials, challenging their tactics in fighting terrorism. Some of the documents are classified and, despite repeated requests from members of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee, have not been released. One document, which is marked "secret" but is not classified, is a twenty-two-page memo written by Mora. It shows that three years ago Mora tried to halt what he saw as a disastrous and unlawful policy of authorizing cruelty toward terror suspects.

The memo is a chronological account, submitted on July 7, 2004, to Vice Admiral Albert Church, who led a Pentagon investigation into abuses at the U.S. detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. It reveals that Mora's criticisms of Administration policy were unequivocal, wide-ranging, and persistent. Well before the exposure of prisoner abuse in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, in April, 2004, Mora warned his superiors at the Pentagon about the consequences of President Bush's decision, in February, 2002, to circumvent the Geneva conventions, which prohibit both torture and "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment." He argued that a refusal to outlaw cruelty toward U.S.-held terrorist suspects was an implicit invitation to abuse. Mora also challenged the legal framework that the Bush Administration has constructed to justify an expansion of executive power, in matters ranging from interrogations to wiretapping. He described as "unlawful," "dangerous," and "erroneous" novel legal theories granting the President the right to authorize abuse. Mora warned that these precepts could leave U.S. personnel open to criminal prosecution.

In important ways, Mora's memo is at odds with the official White House narrative. In 2002, President Bush declared that detainees should be treated "humanely, and to the extent appropriate and consistent with military necessity, in a manner consistent with the principles" of the Geneva conventions. The Administration has articulated this standard many times. Last month, on January 12th, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, responding to charges of abuse at the U.S. base in Cuba, told reporters, "What took place at Guantánamo is a matter of public record today, and the investigations turned up nothing that suggested that there was any policy in the department other than humane treatment." A week later, the White House press spokesman, Scott McClellan, was asked about a Human Rights Watch report that the Administration had made a "deliberate policy choice" to abuse detainees. He answered that the organization had hurt its credibility by making unfounded accusations. Top Administration officials have stressed that the interrogation policy was reviewed and sanctioned by government lawyers; last November, President Bush said, “Any activity we conduct is within the law. We do not torture.” Mora’s memo, however, shows that almost from the start of the Administration’s war on terror the White House, the Justice Department, and the Department of Defense, intent upon having greater flexibility, charted a legally questionable course despite sustained objections from some of its own lawyers.

Alberto J. Mora, the former Navy general counsel. Photograph by Alen MacWeeney.

Mora had some victories. “America has a lot to thank him for,” Brant, the former head of the N.C.I.S., told me. But those achievements were largely undermined by a small group of lawyers closely aligned with Vice-President Cheney. In the end, Mora was unable to overcome formidable resistance from several of the most powerful figures in the government.

Brant had joked at the farewell party that Mora “was an incredible publicity hound.” In fact, Mora—whose status in the Pentagon was equivalent to that of a four-star general—is known for his professional discretion, and he has avoided the press. This winter, however, he agreed to confirm the authenticity and accuracy of the memo and to be interviewed. A senior Defense Department official, whom the Bush Administration made available as a spokesman, on the condition that his name not be used, did so as well. Mora and the official both declined to elaborate on internal Department of Defense matters beyond those addressed in the memo. Mora, a courtly and warm man, is a cautious, cerebral conservative who admired President Reagan and served in both the first and the second Bush Administrations as a political appointee. He strongly supported the Administration’s war on terror, including the invasion of Iraq, and he revered the Navy. He stressed that his only reason for commenting at all was his concern that the Administration was continuing to pursue a dangerous course. “It’s my Administration, too,” he said.

Mora first learned about the problem of detainee abuse on December 17, 2002, when David Brant approached him with accusations of wrongdoing at Guantánamo. As head of the Naval Criminal Investigation Service, Brant often reported to Mora but hadn’t dealt with him on anything so sensitive. “I wasn’t sure how he would react,” Brant, a tall, thin man with a mustache, told me. Brant had already conveyed the allegations to Army leaders, since they had command authority over the military interrogators, and to the Air Force, but he said that nobody seemed to care. He therefore wasn’t hopeful when he went to Mora’s office that afternoon.

When we spoke, Mora recalled the mood at the Pentagon at the time, just fifteen months after the September 11th attacks. “The mentality was that we lost three thousand Americans, and we could lose a lot more unless something was done,” he said. “It was believed that some of the Guantánamo detainees had knowledge of other 9/11-like operations that were under way, or would be executed in the future. The gloves had to come off. The U.S. had to get tougher.” Mora had been inside the Pentagon on September 11th and recalled the jetliner crashing into the building one facet over. He said that it “felt jarring, like a large safe had been dropped overhead.” From the parking lot, he watched the Pentagon burn. The next day, he said, he looked around a room full of top military leaders, and was struck by the thought that “these guys were going to be the tip of the spear.”

Brant oversaw a team of N.C.I.S. agents working with the F.B.I. at Guantánamo Bay, in what was called the Criminal Investigative Task Force. It had been assigned to elicit incriminating information from the nearly six hundred detainees being held there. Unlike a group run by Army intelligence, Joint Task Force 170, or J.T.F.-170, which was looking for intelligence that would help American authorities determine Al Qaeda’s next move, Brant’s investigators gathered evidence that eventually could be used for prosecutions in military tribunals or civilian courts. He and his agents had experience and training in law enforcement: Brant, a civilian, holds an advanced degree in criminology, and worked as a policeman in Miami in the nineteen-seventies.

Brant informed Mora that he was disturbed by what his agents told him about the conduct of military-intelligence interrogators at Guantánamo. These officials seemed poorly trained, Brant said, and were frustrated by their lack of success. He had been told that the interrogators were engaging in escalating levels of physical and psychological abuse. Speaking of the tactics that he had heard about, Brant told me, "Repugnant would be a good term to describe them."

Much of Brant's information had been supplied by an N.C.I.S. psychologist, Michael Gelles, who worked with the C.I.T.F. and had computer access to the Army's interrogation logs at Guantánamo. Brant told me that Gelles "is phenomenal at unlocking the minds of everyone from child abusers to terrorists"; he took it seriously when Gelles described the logs as shocking.

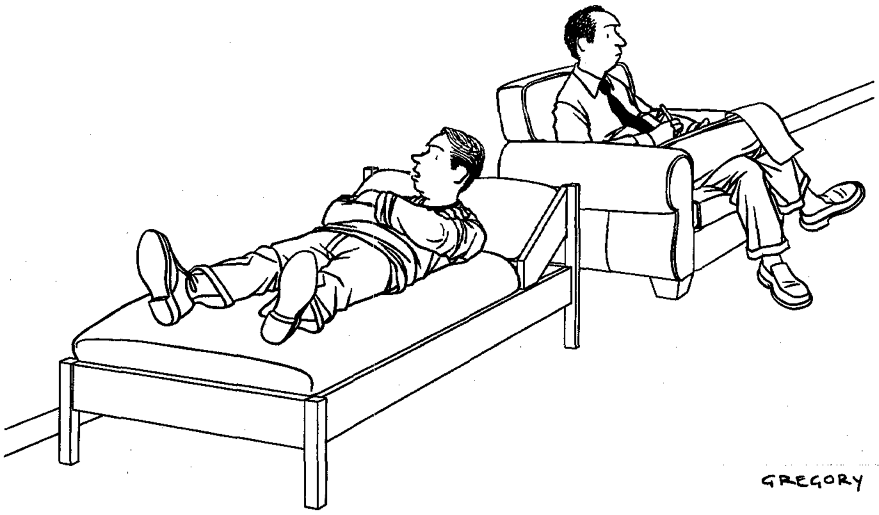
The logs detailed, for example, the brutal handling of a Saudi detainee, Mohammed al-Qahtani, whom an F.B.I. agent had identified as the "missing twentieth hijacker"—the terrorist who was supposed to have been booked on the plane that crashed in a Pennsylvania field. Qahtani was apprehended in Afghanistan a few months after the terrorist attacks.

Qahtani had been subjected to a hundred and sixty days of isolation in a pen perpetually flooded with artificial light. He was interrogated on forty-eight of fifty-four days, for eighteen to twenty hours at a stretch. He had been stripped naked; straddled by taunting female guards, in an exercise called "invasion of space by a female"; forced to wear women's underwear on his head, and to put on a bra; threatened by dogs; placed on a leash; and told that his mother was a whore. By December, Qahtani had been subjected to a phony kidnapping, deprived of heat, given large quantities of intravenous liquids without access to a toilet, and deprived of sleep for three days. Ten days before Brant and Mora met, Qahtani's heart rate had dropped so precipitately, to thirty-five beats a minute, that he required cardiac monitoring.

Brant told me that he had gone to Mora because he didn't want his team of investigators to "in any way observe, condone, or participate in any level of physical or in-depth psychological abuse. No slapping, deprivation of water, heat, dogs, psychological abuse. It was pretty basic, black and white to me." He went on, "I didn't know or care what the rules were that had been set by the Department of Defense at that point. We were going to do what was morally, ethically, and legally permissible." Recently declassified e-mails and orders obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union document Brant's position, showing that all C.I.T.F. personnel were ordered to "stand clear and report" any abusive interrogation tactics.

Brant thinks that the Army's interrogation of Qahtani was unlawful. If an N.C.I.S. agent had engaged in such abuse, he said, "we would have relieved, removed, and taken internal disciplinary action against the individual—let alone whether outside charges would have been brought." Brant said he feared that such methods would taint the cases his agents needed to make against the detainees, undermining any attempts to prosecute them in a court of law. He also doubted the reliability of forced confessions. Moreover, he told me, "it just ain't right."

Another military official, who worked closely with Brant and who has been denied permission to speak on the record, told me that the news "rocked" Mora. The official added that Mora "was visionary about this. He quickly grasped the fact that these techniques in the hands of people with this little training spelled disaster."



"Since my mother was rarely home, I guess I blame my nanny."

In his memo, Mora noted that Brant asked him if he wanted to hear more about the situation. He wrote, "I responded that I felt I had to."

Mora was a well-liked and successful figure at the Pentagon. Born in Boston in 1952, he is the son of a Hungarian mother, Klara, and a Cuban father, Lidio, both of whom left behind Communist regimes for America. Klara's father, who had been a lawyer in Hungary, joined her in exile just before the Soviet Union took control. From the time Alberto was a small boy, Klara Mora told me, he heard from his grandfather the message that "the law is sacred." For the Moras, injustice and abuse were not merely theoretical concepts. One of Mora's great-uncles had been interned in a Nazi concentration camp, and another was hanged after having been tortured. Mora's first memory, as a young child, is of playing on the floor in his mother's bedroom, and watching her crying as she listened to a report on the radio declaring that the 1956 anti-Communist uprising in Hungary had been crushed. "People who went through things like this tend to have very strong views about the rule of law, totalitarianism, and America," Mora said.

At the time, Mora's family was living in Cuba. His father, a Harvard-trained physician, had taken his wife and infant son back in 1952. When Castro seized power, seven years later, the family barely escaped detention after a servant informed the authorities that they planned to flee to America. In the ensuing panic, Alberto obtained an emergency passport from the American Embassy in Havana. "This was my first brush with the government," he said. "When I swore an oath of allegiance to the American government, part of the oath involved taking up arms to defend the country. And I was thinking, This is a serious thing for me to be an eight-year-old boy, raising my hand before the American vice-consul and taking the oath of allegiance." Cuban customs officials, seeing Alberto's American passport, threatened not to let him board a ship. At the last minute, one of his father's colleagues, who had been put in charge of the port, allowed Alberto's emigration.

Mora's family settled in Jackson, Mississippi, where his father taught at the state medical school and Mora attended a Catholic school. For the most part, Jackson was "a wonderful place," Mora recalled, although it was also "very conservative." Racism was rampant and everyone, including Mora, backed Barry Goldwater in the 1964 election. Mora had never met anyone who opposed the Vietnam War until he enrolled at Swarthmore College, a school that he chose after reading an S.A.T.-preparation booklet that described it as small and especially rigorous. He also had never met a feminist before going to hear Kate Millett speak at Bryn Mawr, during his freshman year; her talk infuriated him. After growing up in the South among friends who played sports, drank beer, and had a good time, he found the Northeastern liberal élite curiously "nerdish." The girls had thrown away their skirts—if they'd ever had them, he joked—and there were no parties. Yet he loved the intellectual environment. "You just had these intense discussions," he recalled. "I revelled in it." Mora said that he was the only person among his friends who wasn't a conscientious objector to the war.

Mora graduated in 1974 with honors, and joined the State Department, working in Portugal; in 1979, he entered law school in Miami. Finding litigation work more "a living than a life," Mora said, he was happy to get an appointment as general counsel of the U.S. Information Agency in the first Bush Administration. During the Clinton years, he was appointed to a Republican seat on the Broadcasting Board of Governors, where he was an advocate for Radio Martí, the American news operation aimed at Cuba. He also practiced international law in several private firms. When George W. Bush was elected, Mora—with the backing of former Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, whom he had befriended in Portugal—was appointed general counsel of the Navy. He expected to spend most of his time there streamlining the budget.

The day after Mora's first meeting with Brant, they met again, and Brant showed him parts of the transcript of Qahtani's interrogation. Mora was shocked when Brant told him that the abuse wasn't "rogue activity" but was "rumored to have been authorized at a high level in Washington." The mood in the room, Mora wrote, was one of "dismay." He added, "I was under the opinion that the interrogation activities described would be unlawful and unworthy of the military services." Mora told me, "I was appalled by the whole thing. It was clearly abusive, and it was clearly contrary to everything we were ever taught about American values."

Mora thinks that the media has focussed too narrowly on allegations of U.S.-sanctioned torture. As he sees it, the authorization of cruelty is equally pernicious. "To my mind, there's no moral or practical distinction," he told me. "If cruelty is no longer declared unlawful, but instead is applied as a matter of policy, it alters the fundamental relationship of man to government. It destroys the whole notion of individual rights. The Constitution recognizes that man has an inherent right, not bestowed by the state or laws, to personal dignity, including the right to be free of cruelty. It applies to all human beings, not just in America—even those designated as 'unlawful enemy combatants.' If you make this exception, the whole Constitution crumbles. It's a transformative issue."

Mora said that he did not fear reprisal for stating his opposition to the Administration's emerging policy. "It never crossed my mind," he said. "Besides, my mother would have killed me if I hadn't spoken up. No Hungarian after Communism, or Cuban after Castro, is not aware that human rights are incompatible with cruelty." He added, "The debate here isn't only how to protect the country. It's how to protect our values."

After the second meeting with Brant, Mora called his friend Steven Morello, the general counsel of the Army, and asked him if he knew anything about the abuse of prisoners at Guantánamo. Mora said that Morello answered, "I know a lot about it. Come on down."

In Morello's office, Mora saw what he now refers to as "the package"—a collection of secret military documents that traced the origins of the coercive interrogation policy at Guantánamo. It began on October 11, 2002, with a request by J.T.F.-170's commander, Major General Michael Dunlavey, to make interrogations more aggressive. A few weeks later, Major General Geoffrey Miller assumed command of Guantánamo Bay, and, on the assumption that prisoners like Qahtani had been trained by Al Qaeda to resist questioning, he pushed his superiors hard for more flexibility in interrogations. On December 2nd, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld gave formal approval for the use of "hooding," "exploitation of phobias," "stress positions," "deprivation of light and auditory stimuli," and other coercive tactics ordinarily forbidden by the Army Field Manual. (However, he reserved judgment on other methods, including "waterboarding," a form of simulated drowning.) In Mora's memo, Morello is quoted as saying that "we tried to stop it." But he was told not to ask questions.

According to a participant in the meeting, Mora was "ashen-faced" when he read the package. The documents included a legal analysis, also dated October 11th, by Lieutenant Colonel Diane Beaver, who was then the top legal adviser to J.T.F.-170. She noted that some of the more brutal "counter-resistance" techniques under consideration at Guantánamo, such as waterboarding (for which soldiers had been court-martialled in earlier conflicts), might present legal problems. She acknowledged that American military personnel at Guantánamo, as everywhere else in the world, were bound by the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which characterizes "cruelty," "maltreatment," "threats," and "assault" as felonies. Beaver reasoned, however, that U.S. soldiers preparing to violate these laws in their interrogations might be able to obtain "permission, or immunity" from higher authorities "in advance."

The senior Defense Department official designated to speak for the Administration acknowledged that Beaver's legal argument was inventive. "Normally, you grant immunity after the fact, to someone who has already committed a crime, in exchange for an order to get that person to testify," he said. "I don't know whether we've ever faced the question of immunity in advance before." Nevertheless, the official praised Beaver "for trying to think outside the box. I would credit Diane as raising that as a way to think about it." (Beaver was later promoted to the staff of the Pentagon's Office of General Counsel, where she specializes in detainee issues.)

Mora was less impressed. Beaver's brief, his memo says, "was a wholly inadequate analysis of the law." It held that "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment could be inflicted on the Guantánamo detainees with near impunity"; in his view, such acts were unlawful. Rumsfeld's December 2nd memo approving these "counter-resistance" techniques, Mora wrote, "was fatally grounded on these serious failures of legal analysis." Neither Beaver nor Rumsfeld drew any "bright line" prohibiting the combination of these techniques, or defining any limits for their use. He believed that such rhetorical laxity "could produce effects reaching the level of torture," which was prohibited, without exception, under both U.S. and international law. Mora took his concerns to Gordon England, the Secretary of the Navy, who is now the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Then, on December 20th, with England's authorization, Mora went to William Haynes, the Pentagon's general counsel; they met in Haynes's office, an elegant suite behind vault-like metal doors.

In confronting Haynes, Mora was engaging not just the Pentagon but also the Vice-President's office. Haynes is a protégé of Cheney's influential chief of staff, David Addington. Addington's relationship with Cheney goes back to the Reagan years, when Cheney, who was then a representative from Wyoming, was the ranking Republican on a House select committee investigating the Iran-Contra scandal. Addington, a congressional aide, helped to write a report for the committee's Republican minority, arguing that the law banning covert aid to the Contras—the heart of the scandal—was an unconstitutional infringement of Presidential prerogatives. Both men continue to embrace an extraordinarily expansive view of executive power. In 1989, when Cheney was named Secretary of Defense by George H. W. Bush, he hired Addington as a special assistant, and eventually appointed him to be his general counsel. Addington, in turn, hired Haynes as his special assistant and soon promoted him to general counsel of the Army.

After George W. Bush took office, Addington came to the White House with Cheney, and Haynes took his boss's old job at the Pentagon. Addington has played a central part in virtually all of the Administration's legal strategies, including interrogation and detainee policies. The office of the Vice-President has no statutory role in the military chain of command. But Addington's tenacity, willingness to work long hours, and unalloyed support from Cheney made him, in the words of another former Bush White House appointee, "the best infighter in the Administration." One former government lawyer described him as "the Octopus"—his hands seemed to reach into every legal issue.

Haynes rarely discussed his alliance with Cheney's office, but his colleagues, as one of them told me, noticed that "stuff moved back and forth fast" between the two power centers. Haynes was not considered to be a particularly ideological thinker, but he was seen as "pliant," as one former Pentagon colleague put it, when it came to serving the agenda of Cheney and Addington. In October, 2002, almost three months before his meeting with Mora, Haynes gave a speech at the conservative Federalist Society, disparaging critics who accused the Pentagon of mistreating detainees. A year later, President Bush nominated him to the federal appeals court in Virginia. His nomination is one of several that have been put on hold by Senate Democrats.

In his meeting with Haynes, Mora told me, he said that, whatever its intent, what Rumsfeld's memo permitted was "torture."

According to Mora, Haynes replied, "No, it isn't."

Mora asked Haynes to think about the techniques more carefully. What did "deprivation of light and auditory stimuli" mean? Could a prisoner be locked in a completely dark cell? If so, could he be kept there for a month? Longer? Until he went blind? What, precisely, did the authority to exploit phobias permit? Could a detainee be held in a coffin? What about using dogs? Rats? How far could an interrogator push this? Until a man went insane?

Mora drew Haynes's attention to a comment that Rumsfeld had added to the bottom of his December 2nd memo, in which he asked why detainees could be forced to stand for only four hours a day, when he himself often stood "for 8-10 hours a day." Mora said that he understood that the comment was meant to be jocular. But he feared that it could become an argument for the defense in any prosecution of terror suspects. It also could be read as encouragement to disregard the limits established in the memo. (Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, a retired military officer who was a chief of staff to former Secretary of State Colin Powell, had a similar reaction when he saw Rumsfeld's scrawled aside. "It said, 'Carte blanche, guys,' " Wilkerson told me. "That's what started them down the slope. You'll have My Lais then. Once you pull this thread, the whole fabric unravels.")

Haynes said little during the meeting with Mora, but Mora left the room certain that Haynes would realize he had been too hasty, and would get Rumsfeld to revoke the inflammatory December 2nd memo. Mora told me, "My feeling was it was just a blunder." The next day, he left Washington for a two-week Christmas holiday.

The authorization of harsh interrogation methods which Mora had seen was no aberration. Almost immediately after September 11th, the Administration had decided that protecting the country required extraordinary measures, including the exercise of executive powers exceeding domestic and international norms. In January, 2002, Alberto Gonzales, then the White House counsel (he is now the Attorney General), sent a memo to President Bush arguing for a "new paradigm" of interrogation, declaring that the war on terror "renders obsolete" the "strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners" required by the Geneva conventions, which were ratified by the United States in 1955. That August, the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, which acts as an in-house law firm for the executive branch, issued a memo secretly authorizing the C.I.A. to inflict pain and suffering on detainees during interrogations, up to the level caused by "organ failure." This document, now widely known as the Torture Memo, which Addington helped to draft, also advised that, under the doctrine of "necessity," the President could supersede national and international laws prohibiting torture. (The document was leaked to the press in 2004, after the Abu Ghraib scandal broke.)

Lawrence Wilkerson, whom Powell assigned to monitor this unorthodox policymaking process, told NPR last fall of "an audit trail that ran from the Vice-President's office and the Secretary of Defense down through the commanders in the field." When I spoke to him recently, he said, "I saw what was discussed. I saw it in spades. From Addington to the other lawyers at the White House. They said the President of the United States can do what he damn well pleases. People were arguing for a new interpretation of the Constitution. It negates Article One, Section Eight, that lays out all of the powers of Congress, including the right to declare war, raise militias, make laws, and oversee the common defense of the nation." Cheney's view, Wilkerson suggested, was fuelled by his desire to achieve a state of "perfect security." He said, "I can't fault the man for wanting to keep America safe, but he'll corrupt the whole country to save it." (Wilkerson left the State Department with Powell, in January, 2005.)

At the time, the Administration's embrace of interrogation measures normally proscribed by the Army Field Manual remained largely unknown to the public. But while Mora was on Christmas vacation, the Washington *Post* published a story, by Dana Priest and Barton Gellman, alleging that C.I.A. personnel were mistreating prisoners at the Bagram military base, in Afghanistan. Kenneth Roth, the director of Human Rights Watch, warned that if this was true U.S. officials who knew about it could be criminally liable, under the doctrine of command responsibility. The specific allegations closely paralleled what Mora had seen authorized at Guantánamo.

Upon returning to work on January 6, 2003, Mora was alarmed to learn from Brant that the abuse at Guantánamo had not stopped. In fact, as *Time* reported last year, Qahtani had been stripped and shaved and told to bark like a dog. He'd been forced to listen to pop music at an ear-splitting volume, deprived of sleep, and kept in a painfully cold room. Between confessing to and then recanting various terrorist plots, he had begged to be allowed to commit suicide.

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Mora suspected that such abuse was a deliberate policy, and widened his internal campaign in the hope of building a constituency against it. In the next few days, his arguments reached many of the Pentagon's top figures: Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz; Captain Jane Dalton, the legal adviser to the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Victoria Clarke, who was then the Pentagon spokeswoman; and Rumsfeld.

Meanwhile, on January 9, 2003, Mora had a second meeting with Haynes. According to Mora's memo, when he told him how disappointed he was that nothing had been done to end the abuse at Guantánamo, Haynes explained that "U.S. officials believed the techniques were necessary to obtain information," and that the interrogations might prevent future attacks against the U.S. and save American lives. Mora acknowledged that he could imagine "ticking bomb" scenarios, in which it might be moral—though still not legal—to torture a suspect. But, he asked Haynes, how many lives had to be saved to justify torture? Thousands? Hundreds? Where do you draw the line? To decide this question, shouldn't there be a public debate?

Mora said he doubted that Guantánamo presented such an urgent ethical scenario in any event, since most of the detainees had been held there for more than a year. He also warned Haynes that the legal opinions the Administration was counting on to protect itself might not withstand scrutiny—such as the notion that Guantánamo was beyond the reach of U.S. courts. (Mora was later proved right: in June, 2004, the Supreme Court, in Rasul v. Bush, ruled against the Administration's argument that detainees had no right to challenge their imprisonment in American courts. That month, in a related case, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor declared that "a state of war is not a blank check for the President.")

Mora told Haynes that, if the Pentagon's theories of indemnity didn't hold up in the courts, criminal charges conceivably could be filed against Administration officials. He added that the interrogation policies could threaten Rumsfeld's tenure, and could even damage the Presidency. "Protect your client!" he said.

Haynes, again, didn't say much in response, but soon afterward, at a meeting of top Pentagon officials, he mentioned Mora's concerns to Secretary Rumsfeld. A former Administration official told me that Rumsfeld was unconcerned; he once more joked that he himself stood eight hours a day, and exclaimed, "Torture? That's not torture!" ("His attitude was 'What's the big deal?' " the former official said.) A subordinate delicately pointed out to Rumsfeld that while he often stood for hours it was because he chose to do so, and he could sit down when he wanted. Victoria Clarke, the Pentagon spokeswoman, also argued that prisoner abuse was bad from a public-relations perspective. (Clarke declined to discuss her conversations with Administration officials, other than to say that she regarded Mora as "a very thoughtful guy, who I believed had a lot of important things to say.")

By mid-January, the situation at Guantánamo had not changed. Qahtani's "enhanced" interrogation, as it was called in some documents, was in its seventh week, and other detainees were also being subjected to extreme treatment. Mora continued to push for reform, but his former Pentagon colleague told me that "people were beginning to roll their eyes. It was like 'Yeah, we've already heard this.' "

On January 15th, Mora took a step guaranteed to antagonize Haynes, who frequently warned subordinates to put nothing controversial in writing or in e-mail messages. Mora delivered an unsigned draft memo to Haynes, and said that he planned to "sign it out" that afternoon—making it an official document—unless the harsh interrogation techniques were suspended. Mora's draft memo described U.S. interrogations at Guantánamo as "at a minimum cruel and unusual treatment, and, at worst, torture."

By the end of the day, Haynes called Mora with good news. Rumsfeld was suspending his authorization of the disputed interrogation techniques. The Defense Secretary also was authorizing a special "working group" of a few dozen lawyers, from all branches of the armed services, including Mora, to develop new interrogation guidelines.

Mora, elated, went home to his wife and son, with whom he had felt bound not to discuss his battle. He and the other lawyers in the working group began to meet and debated the constitutionality and effectiveness of various interrogation techniques. He felt, he later told me, that "no one would ever learn about the best thing I'd ever done in my life."

A week later, Mora was shown a lengthy classified document that negated almost every argument he had made. Haynes had outflanked him. He had solicited a separate, overarching opinion from the Office of Legal Counsel, at the Justice Department, on the legality of harsh military interrogations—effectively superseding the working group.

There was only one copy of the opinion, and it was kept in the office of the Air Force's general counsel, Mary Walker, whom Rumsfeld had appointed to head the working group. While Walker sat at her desk, Mora looked at the document with mounting disbelief; at first, he thought he had misread it. There was no language prohibiting the cruel, degrading, and inhuman treatment of detainees. Mora told me that the opinion was sophisticated but displayed "catastrophically poor legal reasoning." In his view, it approached the level of the notorious Supreme Court decision in Korematsu v. United States, in 1944, which upheld the government's internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War.

The author of the opinion was John Yoo, a young and unusually influential lawyer in the Administration, who, like Haynes, was part of Addington's circle. (Yoo and Haynes were also regular racquetball partners.) In the past, Yoo, working closely with Addington, had helped to formulate the argument that the treatment of Al Qaeda and Taliban suspects, unlike that of all other foreign enemies, was not covered by the Geneva conventions; Yoo had also helped to write the Torture Memo. Before joining the Administration, Yoo, a graduate of Yale Law School, had clerked for Justice Clarence Thomas and taught law at Berkeley. Like many conservative legal scholars, he was skeptical of international law, and believed that liberal congressional overreaction to the Vietnam War and Watergate had weakened the Presidency, the C.I.A., and the military. However, Yoo took these arguments further than most. Constitutional scholars generally agreed that the founders had purposefully divided the power to wage war between Congress and the executive branch; Yoo believed that the President's role as Commander-in-Chief gave him virtually unlimited authority to decide whether America should respond militarily to a terror attack, and, if so, what kind of force to use. "Those decisions, under our Constitution, are for the President alone to make," he wrote in a law article.

A top Administration official told me that Yoo, Addington, and a few other lawyers had essentially "hijacked policy" after September 11th. "They thought, Now we can put our views into practice. We have the ability to write them into binding law. It was just shocking. These memos were presented as faits accomplis."

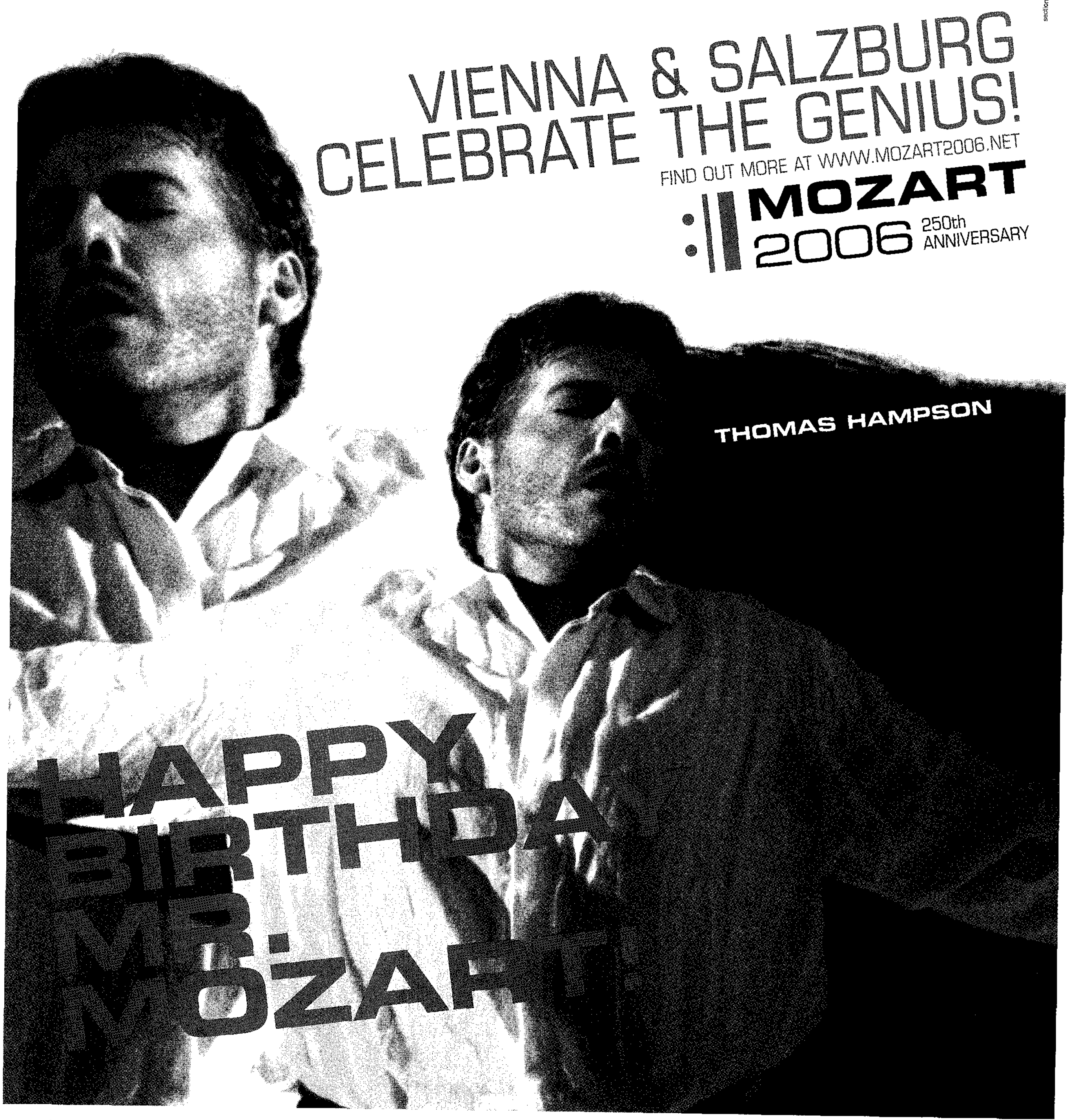
In Yoo's opinion, he wrote that at Guantánamo cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment of detainees could be authorized, with few restrictions.

"The memo espoused an extreme and virtually unlimited theory of the extent of the President's Commander-in-Chief authority," Mora wrote in his account.

HOMOSEXUALITY

First I saw the round bill, like a bud;
then the sooty crested head, with avernal eyes
flickering, distressed, then the peculiar
long neck, wrapping and unwrapping itself,
like pity or love, when I removed the stovepipe
cover of the bedroom chimney to free
what was there and a duck crashed into the room
(I am here in this fallen state), hitting her face,
bending her throat back (my love, my inborn
turbid wanting, at large all night), backing away,
gnawing at her own wing linings (the poison of my life,
the beast, the wolf), leaping out the window,
which I held open (now clear, sane, serene),
before climbing back naked into bed with you.

—*Henri Cole*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THOMAS HAMPSON
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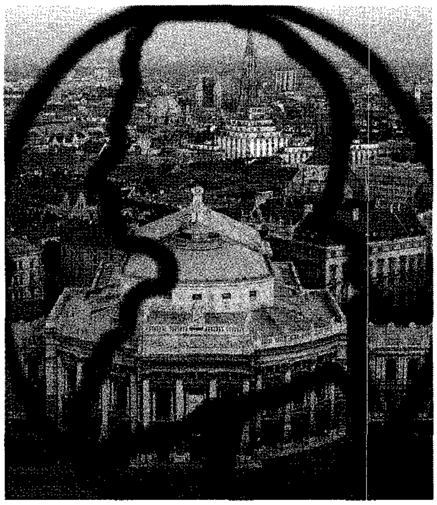

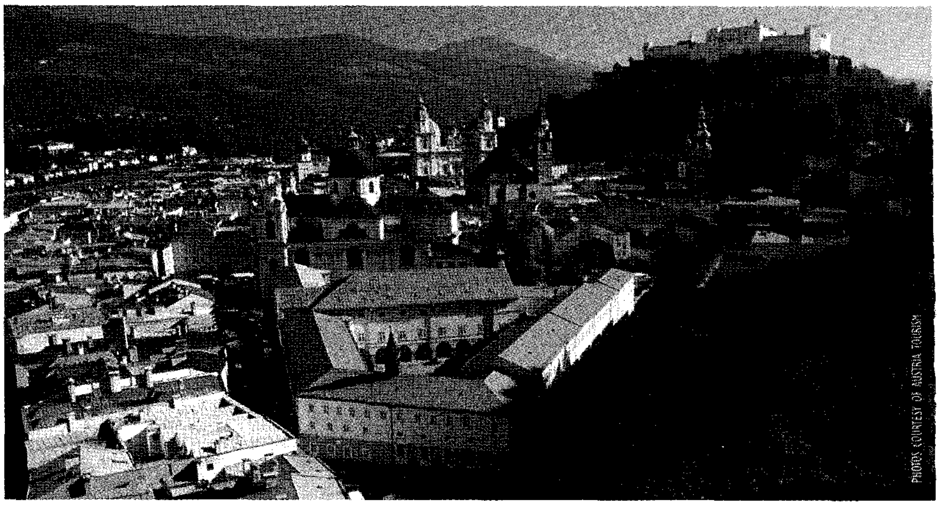

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY! MR. MOZART!

Along with the whole world, Austria is celebrating Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's 250th birth anniversary throughout 2006. In the thirty-five short years of his life, the prodigy, whose music was once described by conductor Bruno Walter as "next to God," composed more than six hundred known works from serenatas and symphonies, to oratorios, concertos, and operas.

The cities of Vienna and Salzburg have created an impressive year-round festival program. His native city Salzburg is celebrating the momentous occasion, where over a span of nearly six weeks, all the musical genius's twenty-two works composed for the stage will be presented during the Salzburg Festival, among other events planned.

Not surprisingly, Vienna, where Mozart maintained residence and composed many of his most significant works, will commemorate his anniversary later this year with the "New Crowned Hope" festival which comprises new commissions. An abridged program of these two great cities' festivities follows.•

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Through November, 2006
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Through December 5, 2006 – Vienna State Opera
"Così fan tutte"
"Don Giovanni"
"The Magic Flute"
"The Marriage of Figaro"
Requiem Mass in D minor K. 626

Through December 12, 2006 – Vienna Volksoper
"The Magic Flute"
"The Marriage of Figaro"
"La clemenza di Tito"
"Don Giovanni"
"Così fan tutte"
Mozart Soiree

Through December 26, 2006 – Landestheater Salzburg
"La finta giardiniera"
"The Magic Flute"

Through January 7, 2007
"Viva! Mozart" exhibition, Salzburg

March 17–September 17, 2006
"Mozart 2006" exhibition at the Albertina, Vienna

May 7–June 18, 2006
Vienna Festival concerts

May 12–June 18, 2006
Vienna Festival, Rathausplatz
"The Magic Flute"
"Così fan tutte"

June 2–5, 2006
Salzburg Festival – Whitsun + Baroque –"Approaching Mozart"

July 23–August 31, 2006
All Mozart's operas at the Salzburg Festival

October–December 2006
"New Crowned Hope" festival, Vienna

October 22–November 11, 2006
Sacred Music Festival, Salzburg

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MOZART 2006 250th ANNIVERSARY

Yoo's opinion didn't mention the most important legal precedent defining the balance of power between Congress and the President during wartime, Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company v. Sawyer. In that 1952 case, the Supreme Court stopped President Truman from forcing the steel worker's union, which had declared a strike, to continue producing steel needed in the Korean War. The Court upheld congressional labor laws protecting the right to strike, and ruled that the President's war powers were at their weakest when they were challenging areas in which Congress had passed legislation. Torture, Mora reasoned, had been similarly regulated by Congress through treaties it had ratified.

In an e-mail response to questions this month, Yoo, who is now back at Berkeley, defended his opinion. "The war on terrorism makes Youngstown more complicated," he said. "The majority opinion explicitly said it was not considering the President's powers as Commander-in-Chief in the theater of combat. The difficulty for Youngstown created by the 9/11 attacks is that the theater of combat now includes parts of the domestic United States." He also argued that Congress had ceded power to the President in its authorization of military force against the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks.

Mora concluded that Yoo's opinion was "profoundly in error." He wrote that it "was clearly at variance with applicable law." When we spoke, he added, "If everything is permissible, and almost nothing is prohibited, it makes a mockery of the law." A few days after reading Yoo's opinion, he sent an e-mail to Mary Walker, saying that the document was not only "fundamentally in error" but "dangerous," because it had the weight of law. When the Office of Legal Counsel issues an opinion on a policy matter, it typically requires the intervention of the Attorney General or the President to reverse it.

Walker wrote back, "I disagree, and I believe D.O.D. G.C."—Haynes, the Pentagon's general counsel—"disagrees."

On February 6th, Mora invited Yoo to his office, in the Pentagon, to discuss the opinion. Mora asked him, "Are you saying the President has the authority to order torture?"

"Yes," Yoo replied.

"I don't think so," Mora said.

"I'm not talking policy," Yoo said. "I'm just talking about the law."

"Well, where are we going to have the policy discussion, then?" Mora asked.

Mora wrote that Yoo replied that he didn't know; maybe, he suggested, it would take place inside the Pentagon, where the defense-policy experts were. (Yoo said that he recalled discussing only how the policy issues should be debated, and where. Torture, he said, was not an option under consideration.)

But Mora knew that there would be no such discussion; as the Administration saw it, the question would be settled by Yoo's opinion. Indeed, Mora soon realized that, under the supervision of Mary Walker, a draft working-group report was being written to conform with Yoo's arguments. Mora wrote in his memo that contributions from the working group "began to be rejected if they did not conform to the OLC"—Office of Legal Counsel—"guidance."

The draft working-group report noted that the Uniform Code of Military Justice barred "maltreatment" but said, "Legal doctrine could render specific conduct, otherwise criminal, *not* unlawful." In an echo of the Torture Memo, it also declared that interrogators could be found guilty of torture only if their "specific intent" was to inflict "severe physical pain or suffering" as evidenced by "prolonged mental harm." Even then, it said, echoing Yoo, the Commander-in-Chief could order torture if it was a military necessity: "Congress may no more regulate the President's ability to detain and interrogate enemy combatants than it may regulate his ability to direct troop movements on the battlefield."

A few days after his meeting with Yoo, Mora confronted Haynes again. He told him that the draft working-group report was "deeply flawed." It should be locked in a drawer, he said, and "never let out to see the light of day again." He advised Haynes not to allow Rumsfeld to approve it.

In the spring of 2003, Mora waited for the final working-group report to emerge, planning to file a strong dissent. But the report never appeared. Mora assumed that the draft based on Yoo's ideas had not been finalized and that the suspension of the harsh techniques authorized by Rumsfeld was still in effect.

In June, press accounts asserted that the U.S. was subjecting detainees to "stress and duress" techniques, including beatings and food deprivation. Senator Patrick Leahy, Democrat of Vermont, wrote to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, asking for a clear statement of the Administration's detainee policy. Haynes wrote a letter back to Leahy, which was subsequently released to the press, saying that the Pentagon's policy was never to engage in torture, or cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment—just the sort of statement Mora had argued for. He wrote in his memo that he saw Haynes's letter as "the happy culmination of the long debates in the Pentagon." He sent an appreciative note to Haynes, saying that he was glad to be on his team.

On April 28, 2004, ten months later, the first pictures from Abu Ghraib became public. Mora said, "I felt saddened and dismayed. Everything we had warned against in Guantánamo had happened—but in a different setting. I was stunned."

He was further taken aback when he learned, while watching Senate hearings on Abu Ghraib on C-SPAN, that Rumsfeld had signed the working-group report—the draft based on Yoo's opinion—a year earlier, without the knowledge of Mora or any other internal legal critics. Rumsfeld's signature gave it the weight of a military order. "This was the first I'd heard of it!" Mora told me. Mora wrote that the Air Force's deputy general counsel, Daniel Ramos, told him that the final working-group report had been "briefed" to General Miller, the commander of Guantánamo, and General James Hill, the head of the Southern Command, months earlier. (The Pentagon confirmed this, though it said that the generals had not seen the full report.) "It was astounding," Mora said. "Obviously, it meant that the working-group report hadn't been abandoned, and that some version of it had gotten into the generals' possession."

The working-group report included a list of thirty-five possible interrogation methods. On April 16, 2003, the Pentagon issued a memorandum to the U.S. Southern Command, approving twenty-four of them for use at Guantánamo, including isolation and what it called "fear up harsh," which meant "significantly increasing the fear level in a detainee." The Defense Department official told me, "It should be noted that there were strong advocates for the approval of the full range of thirty-five techniques," but Haynes was not among them. The techniques not adopted included nudity; the exploitation of "aversions," such as a fear of dogs; and slaps to the face and stomach. However, combined with the legal reasoning in the working-group report, the April memorandum allowed the Secretary to approve harsher methods.

Without Mora's knowledge, the Pentagon had pursued a secret detention policy. There was one version, enunciated in Haynes's letter to Leahy, aimed at critics. And there was another, giving the operations officers legal indemnity to engage in cruel interrogations, and, when the Commander-in-Chief deemed it necessary, in torture. Legal critics within the Administration had been allowed to think that they were engaged in a meaningful process; but their deliberations appeared to have been largely an academic exercise, or, worse, a charade. "It seems that there was a two-track program here," said Martin Lederman, a former lawyer with the Office of Legal Counsel, who is now a visiting professor at Georgetown. "Otherwise, why would they share the final working-group report with Hill and Miller but not with the lawyers who were its ostensible authors?"

Lederman said that he regarded Mora as heroic for raising crucial objections to the Administration's interrogation policy. But he added that Mora was unrealistic if he thought that, by offering legal warnings, he could persuade the leaders of the Administration to change its course. "It appears that they weren't asking to be warned," Lederman said.

The senior Defense Department official defended as an act of necessary caution the decision not to inform Mora and other legal advisers of official policy. The interrogation techniques authorized in the signed report, he explained, were approved only for Guantánamo, and the Pentagon needed to prevent the practices from spreading to other battlefronts. "If someone wants to criticize us for being too careful, I accept that criticism willingly, because we were doing what we could to limit the focus of that report . . . to Guantánamo," the official said.

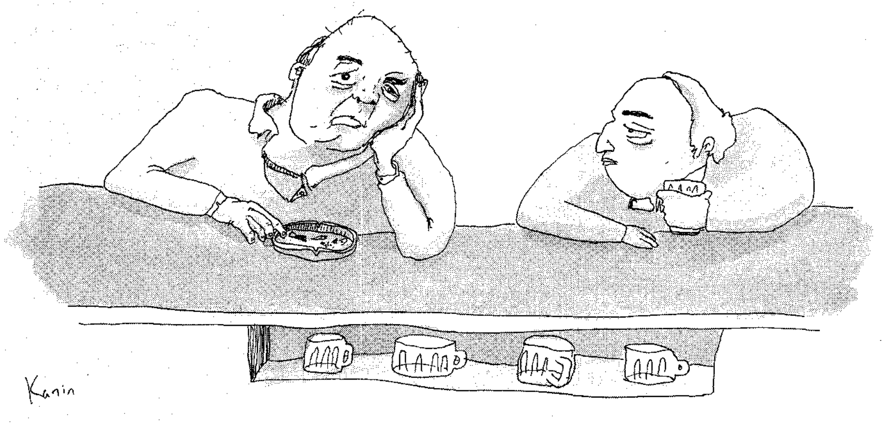
In fact, techniques that had been approved for use at Guantánamo were quickly transferred elsewhere. Four months after General Miller was briefed on the working-group report, the Pentagon sent him to Iraq, to advise officials there on interrogating Iraqi detainees. Miller, who arrived with a group of Guantánamo interrogators, known as the Tiger Team, later supervised all U.S.-run prisons in Iraq, including Abu Ghraib. And legal advisers to General Ricardo Sanchez, the senior U.S. commander in Iraq at the time, used the report as a reference in determining the limits of their interrogation authority, according to a Pentagon report on Abu Ghraib.

A lawyer involved in the working group said that the Pentagon's contention that it couldn't risk sharing the report with its authors "doesn't make any sense." He explained, "We'd seen everything already." The real reason for their exclusion, he speculated, was to avoid dissent. "It would have put them in a bind," he said. "And it would have created a paper trail."

Meanwhile, Mora's warnings about the legal underpinnings of the working-group report proved prophetic. In December, 2003, in an extraordinary repudiation of the Administration's own legal work, the Office of Legal Counsel quietly withdrew the Yoo opinion. The new head of the O.L.C., Jack Goldsmith, a conservative legal scholar who now teaches at Harvard Law School, told the Pentagon that it could no longer rely on the legal analysis. Among other problems, Goldsmith had found Yoo's interpretation of the President's powers overly broad. In March, 2005, the Pentagon declared the working-group report a non-operational "historical" document. By that time, however, much of the most serious abuse at Guantánamo had already occurred.

At the Pentagon in recent weeks, officials portrayed Mora's memo as ancient history. They argued that they had acted quickly to rectify the wrongs he helped expose, by limiting the list of approved interrogation techniques. But while Mora believes that the use of cruel treatment in interrogation has diminished, he feels that the fight to establish clear, humane standards for the treatment of detainees is not over. He also worries that the Administration's views on interrogation have undermined American foreign policy, in part by threatening the international coalition needed to fight terrorism. Allied countries may not be able to support U.S. military actions, he said, if detainees are treated in a manner that most nations deemed illegal.

Just a few months ago, Mora attended a meeting in Rumsfeld's private conference room at the Pentagon, called by Gordon England, the Deputy Defense Secretary, to discuss a proposed new directive defining the military's detention policy. The civilian Secretaries of the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy were present, along with the highest-ranking officers of each service, and



"Everybody else's problems are better than mine."

some half-dozen military lawyers. Matthew Waxman, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for detainee affairs, had proposed making it official Pentagon policy to treat detainees in accordance with Common Article Three of the Geneva conventions, which bars cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment, as well as outrages against human dignity. Going around the huge wooden conference table, where the officials sat in double rows, England asked for a consensus on whether the Pentagon should support Waxman's proposal.

This standard had been in effect for fifty years, and all members of the U.S. armed services were trained to follow it. One by one, the military officers argued for returning the U.S. to what they called the high ground. But two people opposed it. One was Stephen Cambone, the under-secretary of defense for intelligence; the other was Haynes. They argued that the articulated standard would limit America's "flexibility." It also might expose Administration officials to charges of war crimes: if Common Article Three became the standard for treatment, then it might become a crime to violate it. Their opposition was enough to scuttle the proposal.

In exasperation, according to another participant, Mora said that whether the Pentagon enshrined it as official policy or not, the Geneva conventions were already written into both U.S. and international law. Any grave breach of them, at home or abroad, was classified as a war crime. To emphasize his position, he took out a copy of the text of U.S. Code 18.2441, the War Crimes Act, which forbids the violation of Common Article Three, and read from it. The point, Mora told me, was that "it's a statute. It exists—we're not free to disregard it. We're bound by it. It's been adopted by the Congress. And we're not the only interpreters of it. Other nations could have U.S. officials arrested."

Not long afterward, Waxman was summoned to a meeting at the White House with David Addington. Waxman declined to comment on the exchange, but, according to the *Times*, Addington berated him for arguing that the Geneva conventions should set the standard for detainee treatment. The U.S. needed maximum flexibility, Addington said. Since then, efforts to clarify U.S. detention policy have languished. In December, Waxman left the Pentagon for the State Department.

To date, no charges have been brought against U.S. personnel in Guantánamo. The senior Defense Department official I spoke to affirmed that, in the Pentagon's view, Qahtani's interrogation was "within the bounds." Elsewhere in the world, as Mora predicted, the controversy is growing. Last week, the United Nations Human Rights Commission called for the U.S. to shut down the detention center at Guantánamo, where, it said, some practices "must be assessed as amounting to torture." The U.N. report, which the White House dismissed, described "the confusion with regard to authorized and unauthorized interrogation techniques" as "particularly alarming."

Mora recently started a new job, as the general counsel for Wal-Mart's international operations. A few days after his going-away party, he reflected on his tenure at the Pentagon. He felt that he had witnessed both a moral and a legal tragedy.

In Mora's view, the Administration's legal response to September 11th was flawed from the start, triggering a series of subsequent errors that were all but impossible to correct. "The determination that Geneva didn't apply was a legal and policy mistake," he told me. "But very few lawyers could argue to the contrary once the decision had been made."

Mora went on, "It seemed odd to me that the actors weren't more troubled by what they were doing." Many Administration lawyers, he said, appeared to be unaware of history. "I wondered if they were even familiar with the Nuremberg trials—or with the laws of war, or with the Geneva conventions. They cut many of the experts on those areas out. The State Department wasn't just on the back of the bus—it was left off the bus." Mora understood that "people were afraid that more 9/11s would happen, so getting the information became the overriding objective. But there was a failure to look more broadly at the ramifications.

"These were enormously hardworking, patriotic individuals," he said. "When you put together the pieces, it's all so sad. To preserve flexibility, they were willing to throw away our values." ♦

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BY DAVID SEDARIS

Before it was moved out near the fairgrounds, the North Carolina Museum of Art was located in downtown Raleigh, and often, when we were young, my sister Gretchen and I would cut out of church and spend an hour looking at the paintings. The collection was not magnificent, but it was enough to give you a general overview, and to remind you that you pretty much sucked. Both Gretchen and I thought of ourselves as artists—she the kind that could actually draw and paint, and me the kind that pretended I could actually draw and paint. When my sister looked at a picture, she would stand at a distance, and then slowly, almost imperceptibly, drift forward, until her nose was right up against the canvas. She examined all of the painting, and then parts of it, her fingers dabbing in sympathy as she studied the brushstrokes.

"What are you thinking about?" I once asked.

And she said, "Oh, you know, the composition, the surfaces, the way things look realistic when you're far away but weird when you're up close."

"Me, too," I said, but what I was really thinking was how grand it would be to own a legitimate piece of art and display it in my bedroom. Even with my babysitting income, paintings were out of the question, so instead I invested in postcards, which could be bought for a quarter in the museum shop and matted with shirt cardboard. This made them look more presentable.

I was looking for framing ideas one afternoon when I wandered into a little art gallery called the Little Art Gallery. It was a relatively new place, located in the North Hills Mall and owned by a woman named Ruth, who was around my mom's age, and introduced me to the word "fabulous," as in: "If you're interested, I've got a fabulous new Matisse that just came in yesterday."

This was a poster rather than a painting, but still I regarded it the way I thought a connoisseur might, removing my glasses and sucking on the stem as I tilted my head. "I'm just not sure how it will fit in with the rest of my collection," I said, meaning my Gustav Klimt calendar and the cover of the King Crimson LP tacked above my dresser.

Ruth treated me like an adult, which must have been a task, given the way I carried on. "I don't know if you realize it," I once told her, "but it seems that Picasso is actually Spanish."

"Is he?" she said.

"I had a few of his postcards on my French wall, the one where my desk is, but now I've moved them next to my bed, beside the Miró."

She closed her eyes, pretending to imagine this new configuration.

"Good move," she said.

The art gallery was not far from my junior high, and I used to stop by after class and hang out. Hours later I'd return home, and when my mother asked where I had been I'd say, "Oh, at my dealer's."

In 1970, the only art work in my parents' house was a family tree and an unframed charcoal portrait of my four sisters and me done by a guy at a street fair. Both hung in the dining room, and I thought they were pretty good until I started spending time with Ruth and decided that they weren't challenging enough.

"What more do you want from a group picture of five spoiled children?" my mother asked, and rather than trying to explain I took her to see Ruth. I knew that the two of them would get along—I just didn't think they would get along so well. At first the topic of conversation was me—Ruth doing the cheerleading and Mom just sort of agreeing. "Oh, yes," she said, "His bedroom is lovely. Everything in its place."

Then my mother started hanging out

at the gallery as well, and began buying things. Her first purchase was an elongated statue of a man made from what looked like twisted paper but was actually metal pressed into thin sheets. He stood maybe two feet tall and held three rusted wires, each attached to a blown-glass balloon that floated above his head. "Mr. Balloon Man," she called it.

"I'm just not certain he really needs that top hat," I told her.

And my mother said "Oh, really?" in a way that meant: "If I want your opinion I'll ask for it."

It bothered me that she'd bought something without asking my advice, and so I continued to offer my thoughtful criticism, hoping it might teach her a lesson.

Her next piece was a grandfather clock with a body made of walnut and a human face pounded from what appeared to be a Chinese gong. The face wasn't realistic, but what she called "semi-abstract," a word she had picked up from Ruth. A word that was supposed to be mine. I didn't know exactly how much the clock had cost, but I knew it was expensive. She called it "Mr. Creech," in honor of the artist, and when I tried to explain that art was not a pet you gave a little name to she told me she could call it whatever the hell she wanted to.

"Should I put Mr. Creech next to Mr. Balloon Man, or does that make the dining room too busy?"

"Don't ask me," I told her. "You're the expert."

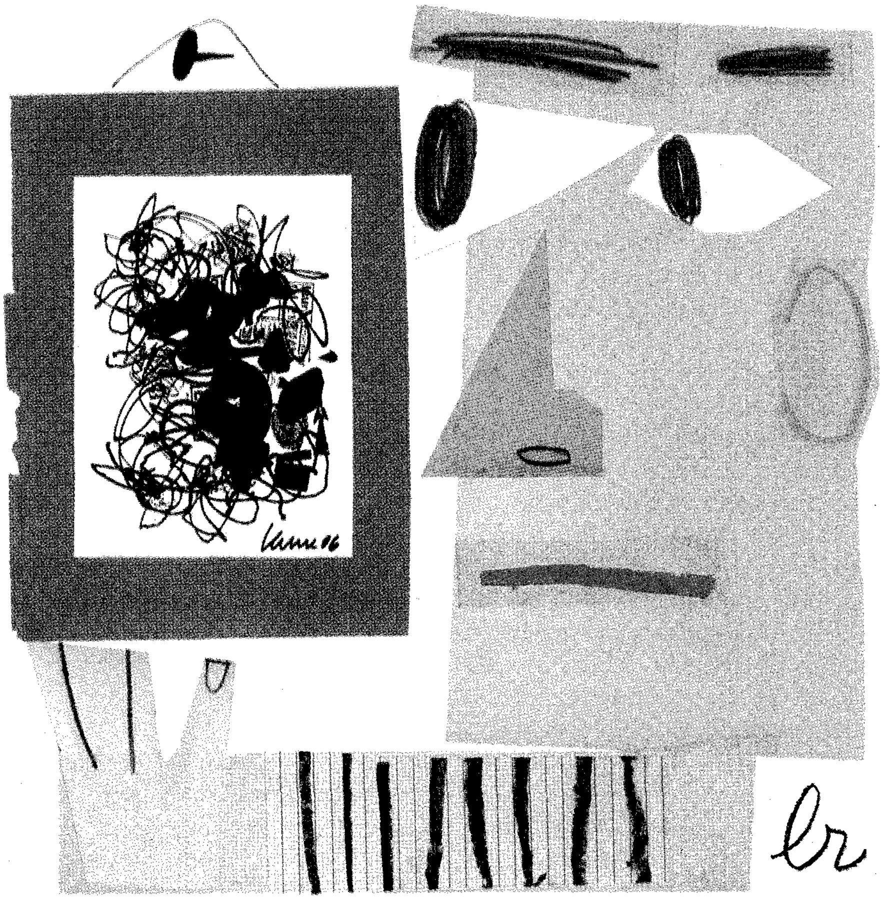
Then my father was introduced to Ruth, and he became an expert as well. Art brought my parents together in a way that nothing else had, and because their interest was new they were able to share it without being competitive. Suddenly they were a team, the Ed and Nancy Kienholz of Raleigh, North Carolina.

"Your mother's got a real eye," my father boasted—this in regard to "Cracked Man," a semi-abstract face made by the same potter who had crafted our new coffee table. Dad wasn't in the habit of throwing money around, but this, he explained, was an investment, something that, like stocks and bonds, would steadily appreciate in value, ultimately going "right through the roof."

LAURIE ROSENWALD

"And in the meantime we all get to enjoy it," my mother said. "All of us except Mr. Crabby," by which she meant me.

The allure of art had always been that my parents knew nothing about it. It had been a private interest, something between me and Gretchen.



My parents' art would steadily appreciate, ultimately going "right through the roof."

Now, though, everyone was in on it. Even my Greek grandmother had an opinion, that being that unless Jesus was in the picture it wasn't worth looking at. *Yiayia* was not discriminating—a Giotto or a Rouault, it made no difference so long as the subject was either nailed to a cross or raising his arms before a multitude. She liked her art to tell a story, and though that particular story didn't interest me, I liked the same thing. It's why I preferred the museum's "Market Scene on a Quay" to its Kenneth Noland. When it came to *making* art, however, I tended toward the Noland, as measuring out triangles was a lot easier than painting a realistic-looking haddock.

Before my parents started hanging out at the gallery, they thought I was a trailblazer. Now they saw me for what I was: not just a copycat but a lazy one. Looking at my square of green imposed atop a pumpkin-colored background, my father stepped back, saying, "That's just like what's-his-name, that guy who lives at the Outer Banks."

"Actually, it's more like Ellsworth Kelly," I said.

"Well, he must have gotten his ideas from the guy at the Outer Banks."

At the age of fifteen, I was maybe not the expert I made myself out to be, but I did own a copy of "The History of Art," and knew that eastern North Carolina was no hotbed of artistic expression. I was also fairly certain that no serious painter would devote half the canvas to his signature, or stick an exclamation point at the end of his name.

"That shows what you know," my mother said. "Art isn't about following the rules—it's about breaking them. Right, Lou?"

And my father said, "You got it."

The next thing they bought was a

portrait by a man I'll call Bradlington. "He's an alcoholic," my mother announced, this as if his drinking somehow made him more authentic.

With the exception of my grandmother, everyone liked the Bradlington, especially me. It brought to mind a few of the Goyas I'd seen in my art-history book—the paintings he did toward the end, when the faces were just sort of slashed on. "It's very moody," I pronounced. "Very . . . invocative."

A few months later, they bought another Bradlington, a portrait of a boy lying on his back in a ditch. "He's stargazing," my mother said, but to me the eyes seemed blank, like a dead person's. I thought my parents were on a roll, and was disappointed when, instead of buying a third Bradlington, they came home with an Edna Hibel. This was a lithograph rather than a painting, and it pictured a young woman collecting flowers in a basket. The yellow of the blossoms matched the new wallpaper in the breakfast nook, and so it was hung above the table. The idea of matching art work to décor was, to me, an abomination, but anything that resulted in new stuff was just fine by my mother. She bought a sofa the salesman referred to as the Navajo, and then she bought a piece of pottery that complemented the pattern of the upholstery. It was a vase that stood four feet high, and was used to hold the dried sea oats that matched the frame of an adjacent landscape.

My mother's sister, Joyce, saw a photo of our new living room, and explained that the American Indians were a lot more than sofa cushions. "Do you have any idea how those people live?" she asked. Joyce did charity work with the tribes in New Mexico, and, through her, my mother learned about desperate poverty and kachina dolls.

My father preferred the tribes of the Pacific Northwest, and began collecting masks, which smirked and glowered from the wall above the staircase. I'd hoped that the Indian stuff might lead them to weed out some of their earlier choices, but no such luck. "I can't get rid of Mr. Creech," my mother said. "He hasn't appreciated yet."

I was in my second year of college by then, and was just starting to realize that the names my parents so casually tossed around were not nationally known, and never would be. Mention Bradlington to your Kent State art-history teacher, and she'd take the pencil out of her mouth and say, "Who?"

"He's an alcoholic? Lives in North Carolina?"

"I'm sorry, but the name means nothing to me."

As for the others, the Edna Hibels and Stephen Whites, they were the sort whose work was advertised in *ARTnews* rather than *Artforum*, their paintings and lithographs "proudly shown" alongside wind chimes at places with names like the Screeching Gull, or Desert Sunsets, galleries almost always located in a vacation spot. I tried pointing this out to my parents, but they wouldn't hear it. Maybe *today* my art-history teacher drew a blank on Bradlington, but after his liver gave out she'd sure as hell know who he was. "That's the way it works sometimes," my father said. "The artist is only appreciated after he's dead. Look at van Gogh!"

"So will *every* artist be appreciated after his death?" I asked. "If I'm hit by a van tomorrow afternoon, will the painting I did last week be worth a fortune?"

"In a word, no," my father said. "I mean, it's not enough just to be dead—you've got to have some talent. Bradlington's got it out the ass, and so does Hibel. The gal who made the coffee table is going to last for an eternity, but, as for you, I wouldn't bank on it."

"What's that supposed to mean?" I asked.

My father settled down on the Navajo. "It means that your art work doesn't look like art."

"And you're the expert on that?"

"I'd say so, yes."

"Well, you can just go to hell," I told him.

I'd never have admitted it, but I knew exactly what my father was talking about. At its best, my art looked like homework. This was to be expected with painting and drawing—things requiring actual skill—but even my later, conceptual pieces were unconvincing. The airmail envelope full of toenail clippings, the model of the Lincoln Memorial made of fudge: in someone else's hands, such objects might provoke discussion, but in my own they seemed only desperate and pretentious. Not just homework but bad homework.

I quit making homework when I turned thirty, and started collecting paintings some ten years later, shortly after moving to Europe. A few of my canvases are French or English, portraits mainly, dating from the eighteen-hundreds, but the ones I most care about are Dutch, and were done in the seventeenth century. "Monkey Eating Peaches," "Man Fleeing a Burning Village," "Peasant Woman Changing a Dirty Diaper"—how can you go wrong with such straightforward titles? The artists are minor—sons, most often, of infinitely more talented fathers—but if I say their names with a certain authority I can almost always provoke a response. ("Did you say van der Pol? Oh, right, I think I saw something of his at the Louvre.")

People hush up when they stand before my paintings. They clasp their hands behind their backs and lean forward, wondering, most likely, how much I paid. I want to tell them that each cost less than the average pool table. I myself have no interest in pool, so why not take that money and spend it on something I like? Then, too, the paintings will appreciate, maybe not a lot, but given time I can surely get my money back, so in a way I'm just guarding them. Explaining, though, would ruin the illusion that I am wealthy and tasteful. A connoisseur. A collector.

The sham falls apart only when I'm visited by a real collector, or, even worse, by my father, who came last year and spent a week questioning my judgment. One of my paintings shows a group of cats playing musical instruments. It sounds hokey on paper—cute, even—but in real life it's pleasantly revolting, the musicians looking more like monsters than like anything you'd keep as a pet. I have it in my living room, and, after asking the price, my father shook his head the way you might when witnessing an accident. "Boy," he said. "They sure saw you coming."

Whether I'm buying a painting or a bedspread, his premise is always the same—namely, that I am retarded, and people take advantage of me.

"Why would something that's survived three hundred years not cost that much?"

I asked, but he'd moved to another evident eyesore, this one Dutch, and showing a man undergoing a painful and primitive foot surgery. "I wouldn't spend two minutes looking at this one," he told me.

"That's O.K.," I said.

"Even if I were in prison, and this was the only thing on my wall, I wouldn't waste my time with it. I'd look at my feet or at my mattress or whatever, but not at this, no way."

I tried my best not to sound too hopeful. "Is someone sending you to prison?"

"No," he said. "But whoever sold this to you should be there. I don't know what you paid, but if it was more than ten dollars I think you could probably sue the guy for fraud." He looked at it one last time, and then rubbed his eyes as if they'd been gassed. "God Almighty. What were you thinking?"

"If art is a matter of personal taste, why are you being so aggressive?" I asked.

"Because your taste stinks," he told me. This led him to reflect upon "Cracked Man," which still hangs in the foyer beside his living room. "It's three slabs of clay cemented to a board, and not a day goes by when I don't sit down and look at that thing," he said. "I don't mean glancing, but full-fledged staring. Contemplating, if you catch my drift."

"I do," I said.

He then described the piece to my boyfriend, Hugh, who had just returned from the grocery store. "It was done by a gal named Proctor. I'm sure you've heard of her."

"Actually, no," Hugh said.

My father repeated the name in his normal tone of voice. Then he began yelling it, and Hugh interrupted, saying, "Oh, right. I think I've read something about her."

"You're damn right you have," my father said.

Before they started collecting art, my parents bought some pretty great things, the best being a concrete lawn ornament they picked up in the early nineteen-sixties. It's a toadstool, maybe three feet tall, with a red spotted cap and a benevolent little troll relaxing at its base. My father placed it just beyond the patio in our back yard, and what struck my sisters and me then, and still does, is the troll's expression of complete acceptance. Others might cry or get bent out of shape when their personal tastes are denounced and ridiculed, but not him. Icicles hanging off his beard, slugs cleaving to the tops of his pointed shoes: "Oh, well," he seems to say. "These things happen."

Even when we reached our teens, and developed a sense of irony, it never occurred to us to think of the troll as tacky. No one ever stuck a lit cigarette in his mouth, or disgraced him with sexual organs, the way we did with Mr. Balloon Man, or my mother's Kitchen Witch. One by one, my sisters and I left home, and the back yard became a dumping ground. Snakes nested beneath broken bicycles and piles of unused building supplies, but on return visits we would each screw up our courage and step onto the patio for an audience with Mr. Toadstool. "You and that lawn ornament," my mom would say. "Honest to God, you'd think you'd been raised in a trailer."

Standing in her living room, surrounded by her art collection, my mother frequently warned us that death brought out the worst in people. "You kids might think you're close, but just wait until your father and I are gone, and you're left to divide up our property. Then you'll see what savages you really are."

My sisters and I had always imagined that, when the time came, we would calmly move through the house, putting our names on this or that. Lisa would get the dessert plates, Amy the mixer, and so on, without dissent. It was distressing, then, to discover that the one thing we all want is that toadstool. It's a symbol of the people our parents used to be, and, more than anything in the house itself, it looks like art to us. When my father dies, I envision a mad dash through the front door, past the Hibel and the Bradlingtons, past "Cracked Man" and "Balloon Man" and into Indian territory, where we'll push one another down the stairs, six connoisseurs, all with gray hair, charging toward a concrete toadstool. ♦

IT'S ABOUT TIME DEPARTMENT

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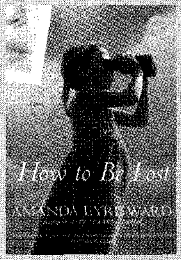

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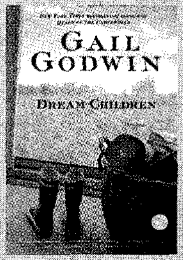

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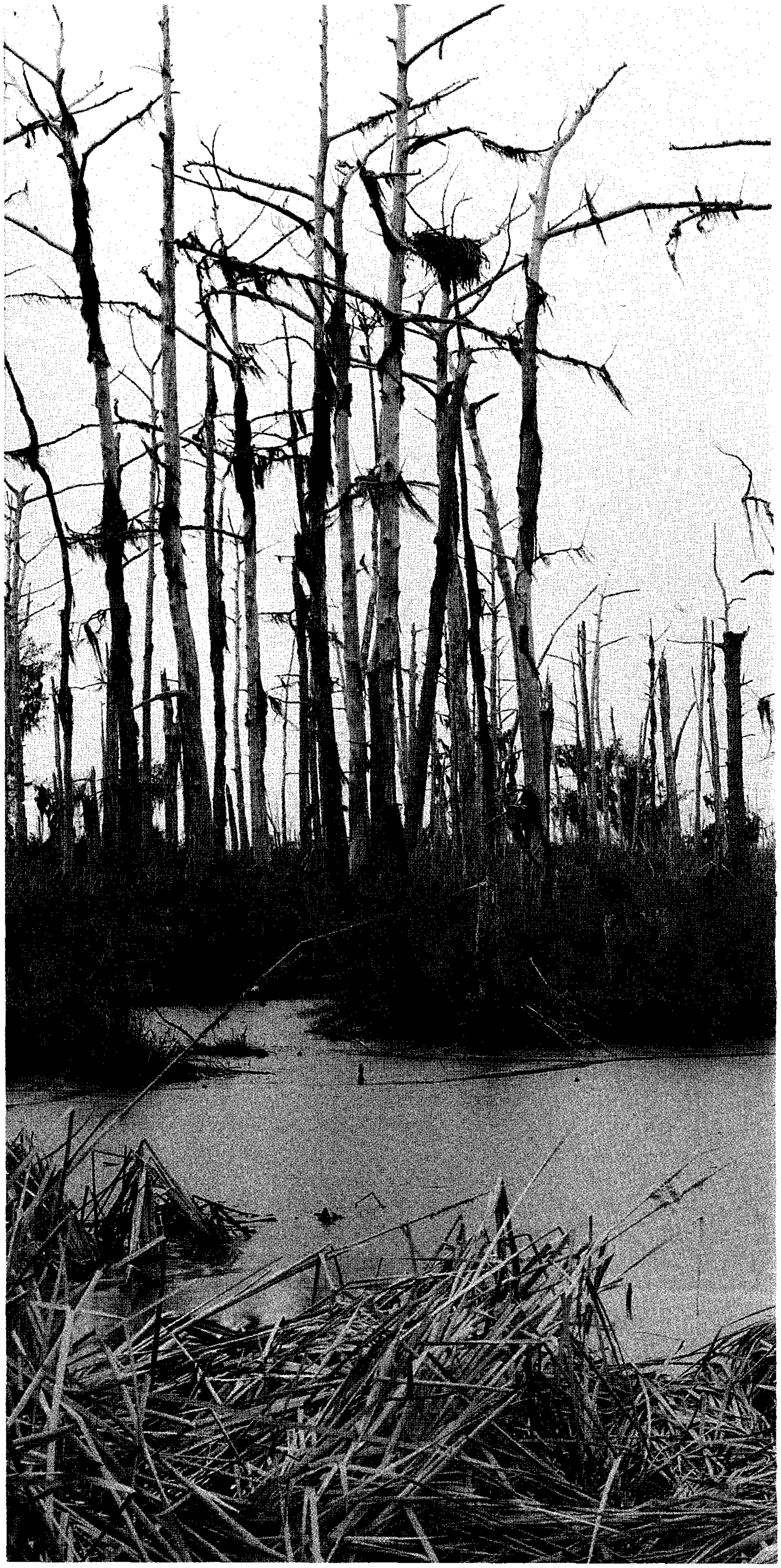
READER'S CIRCLE

When you see this seal on the outside, there's a great book club read inside.

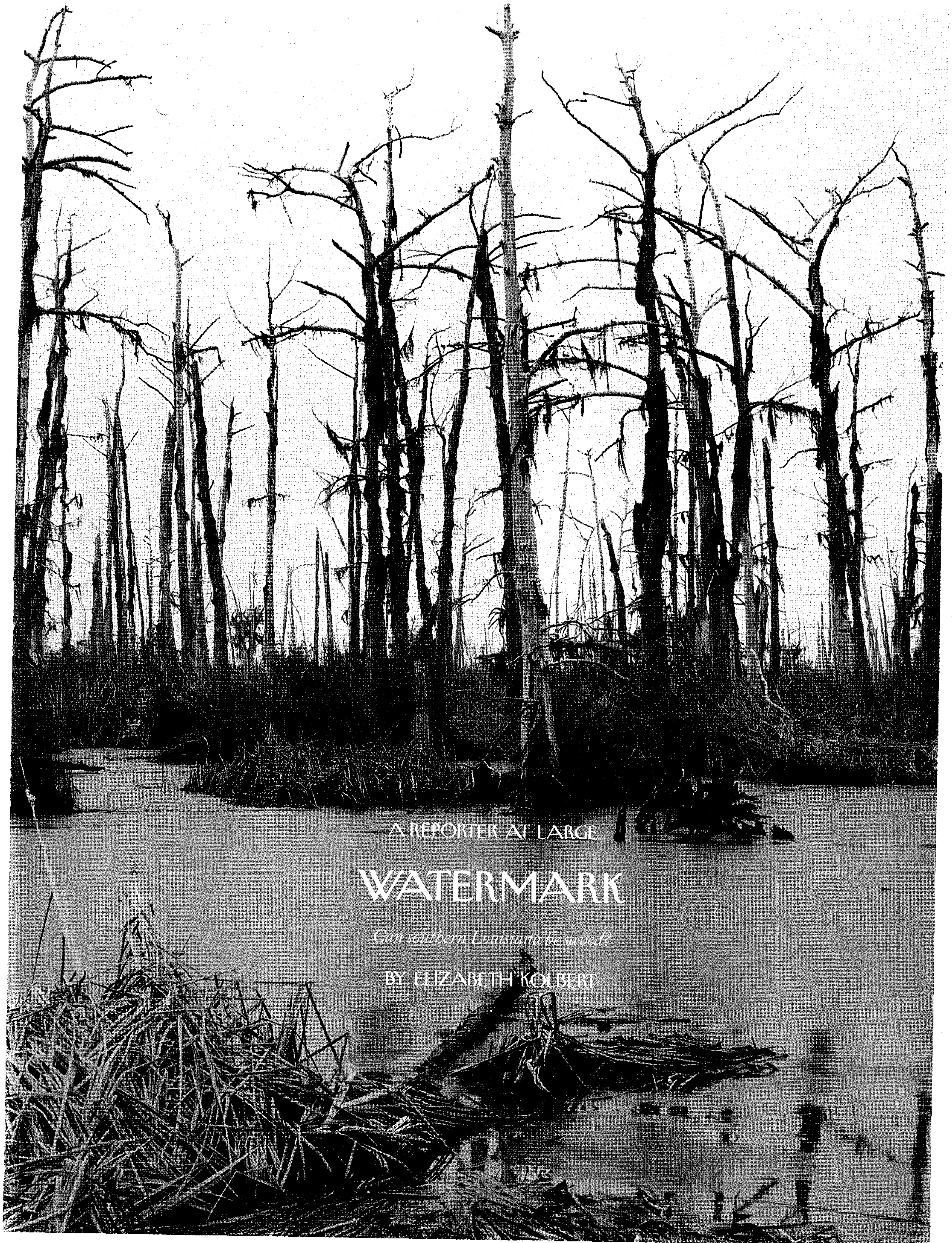
Once the Mississippi River's main outlet, Bayou Lafourche—pronounced "la-foosh"—is now a channel barely wide enough to accommodate two shrimp boats heading in opposite directions. Its waters are slack and brown and salty, so much so that people who drink them—and many who live along the bayou do—complain that they sometimes taste like baking soda. The bayou wends its way south and east from Donaldsonville, Louisiana, through Thibodaux and Lockport and Cut Off, past citrus groves and shotgun houses and subdivisions eating into the sugarcane fields. Eventually, it empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Follow it almost to the end and you get to Leeville, a town that has spent most of the past century disappearing.

Leeville was settled by refugees, or, to use a less contested term, flood victims. On October 1, 1893, a hurricane wiped out the area's main settlement, Caminadaville, which sat on a spit of land bordered on three sides by the Gulf and on the fourth by swamp. Nearly half of Caminadaville's inhabitants perished in the storm, most by drowning, some when the buildings they had taken refuge in collapsed. Father Pierre Grimaux, the local parish priest, who rode out the disaster in the upper story of the presbytery, reported that "out of two hundred and fifty houses, only four remained." Survivors sailed up the bayou in their damaged *canots* and began buying land from an orange-grower named Peter Lee, who was selling plots for $12.50 each. For sixteen years, they fished, planted rice, and held *fais do-do* dancing parties in homes with covered verandas. Then, in 1909, the Leeville Hurricane struck. (A contemporary newspaper account described survivors of that storm subsisting on drowned rabbit.) Six years later, a third hurricane forced residents to flee north once more. According to local legend, the storm surge carried one house from Leeville nine miles inland. The owner simply bought the plot underneath it and moved back in.

In the nineteen-thirties, Leeville rebounded briefly. Oil was discovered in the area, and by the end of the decade there were ninety-eight producing wells in town. The pay was good and regulation nonexistent. Blowouts routinely rained sulfur and brine onto the houses, into the cisterns, over the trees. Tin roofs cor-



As the land continues to shrink, groves of dead cypress trees, known as ghost forests, mark t



A REPORTER AT LARGE

WATERMARK

Can southern Louisiana be saved?

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

advance of the encroaching salt water. An area the size of a football field succumbs every thirty-eight minutes. Photograph by Robert Polidori.

roded and vegetable gardens shrivelled up. When the wells ran dry, oil production moved offshore and Leeville was again deserted. There were no more jobs, and the town itself had begun to wash away. Where once men in straw hats picked oranges and harvested rice, today there is mostly open water.

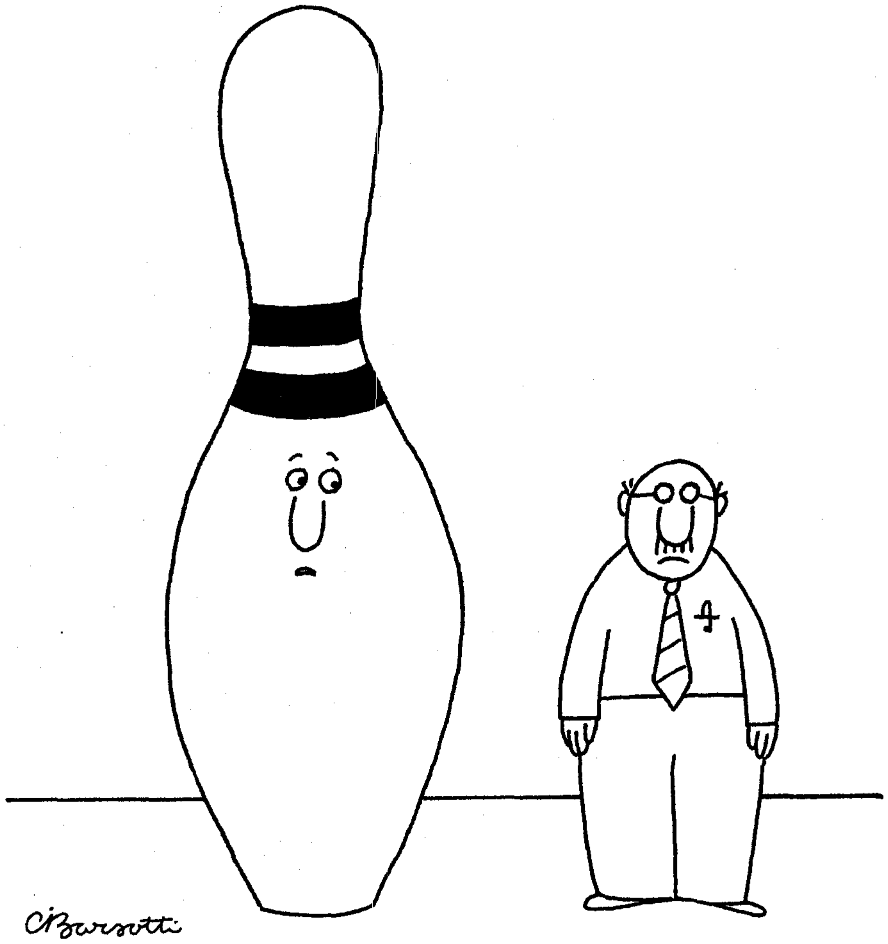
A few months ago, I went to visit the remains of Leeville with Windell Curole, the director of the South Lafourche Levee District. Curole, as it happens, is a descendant of Peter Lee, and also a member of a swamp pop group that calls itself the Hurricane Levee Band. He is a trim man of fifty-four, with thick gray hair and dark, deep-set eyes. Seven of his eight great-grandparents grew up in Caminadaville, and three of his four grandparents lived in Leeville. Curole and his wife are raising their two children in Cut Off, thirty-five miles from the coast.

"That movement of my family reflects the communities of southern Louisiana," he told me. It was a dull autumn day, threatening rain that never came. "We have retreated, and we continue to retreat." As we made our way south along the bayou, Curole kept pointing out landmarks from his childhood. "That's where my grandfather's trapping camp was," he said, gesturing toward a stretch of boggy marsh. "When I was a baby, I could sit down in the front yard and not get my pants wet. When my mama was a kid, you had oak trees." Curole receives checks for an oil lease on a plot that he inherited from his grandparents. The plot is now submerged. In Leeville, we passed a bait shop, a gas station, and a cluster of mobile homes perched, like birds' nests, on narrow wooden pilings. We wandered down to a dock, which had a view of one of the last remnants of the old town—a cemetery. Leeville's dead had not been buried but entombed in vaults. Waves lapped at the caved-in bricks. A porpoise jumped out of the water, then slipped back in.

Five thousand years ago, much of southern Louisiana did not exist. A hundred years from now, it is unclear how much of it will remain. The region, it is often observed, is losing land at the rate of a football field every thirty-eight minutes. Alternatively, it is said, the area is shrinking by a large desktop's worth of ground every second, or a tennis court's worth every thirteen seconds, or twenty-five square miles a year. Between 1930 and 2000, some 1.2 million acres, an area roughly the size of Delaware, disappeared. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita stripped away an estimated seventy-five thousand acres—a loss as big as Manhattan and Brooklyn combined. The U.S. Geological Survey has published a map illustrating the process. Areas that have already vanished appear in red, and areas that are expected to vanish by 2050 in yellow. On the map, the southern coast looks as if it were on fire. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "The rate at which Louisiana's land is converting to water is probably the fastest in the world."

The signs of this impermanence are most obvious at the ends of the bayous, where the border between land and sea is changing so quickly that no one really bothers to keep track of it anymore. But, once you start looking, those signs can be found just about everywhere. All across southern Louisiana, there are groves of dead cypress trees, known as ghost forests, which have been killed off by encroaching salt water. On the eastern edge of New Orleans, the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet Canal—MR-GO ("Mister Go") for short—provides a shortcut for shipping. When it was completed, in 1965, it was five hundred feet across; now it is more than three times as wide. Then, of course, there's the city itself. Those neighborhoods, like Lakeview and the Lower Ninth Ward, which lie several feet below sea level are still essentially deserted.

Over the years, a great many plans have been drawn up to protect the Louisiana coast; these range from building up barrier islands with pumped sand to digging an alternative route for the Mississippi River—the so-called Third Delta Conveyance Channel. Katrina and Rita have inspired a whole new generation of proposals. Curole, who since the hurricanes has made several trips to Washington to testify before Congress, has, for example, been advocating a series of thirteen-foot levees that would loop around from the Lake Pontchartrain basin through Lafourche and Terrebonne



"What's your story?"

Parishes to Morgan City, stretching more than a hundred miles. All of these plans rest on the same assumption, which is that something can be done to halt, or at least dramatically slow, land loss. If this can be accomplished, there are many possible futures for southern Louisiana. If it can't, there is only one.

Roy Dokka is a professor at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. He is a large man, with a wide face and wavy dark hair. By training, he is a structural geologist, and in the early part of his career, at the University of Southern California, he spent a lot of time mapping earthquake faults, including the ones that run near Yucca Mountain, in Nevada, where the federal government would later propose storing high-level nuclear waste. About ten years ago, Dokka became interested in using G.P.S. technology to study how the earth's surface is moving. This project led him to undertake a study of elevations in southern Louisiana, which yielded some unexpected—and, in many circles, unwelcome—results.

On a hot, bright-blue day a few weeks after Katrina, I went with Dokka to attend a meeting with officials in Plaquemines Parish, just southeast of New Orleans. There was heavy traffic—since the hurricanes, the roads that are still functioning have been carrying nearly twice as many cars—so we were late getting to the parish-council office, in the town of Belle Chasse. As we arrived, helicopters carrying sandbags were thumping overhead. In the parking lot, we met the parish president, Benny Rousselle, who was walking in the opposite direction. He pulled Dokka aside.

"Let me ask you, this is not going to affect my rebuilding by more than a foot?" he said. His tone suggested that he was not so much asking as telling. "I can live with a foot or so."

Dokka nodded silently, then, when Rousselle was out of earshot, muttered, "You wouldn't have to live with it, but your people might die from it." We headed into the building, which was faced with wooden planks, like a Western saloon. A half-dozen people were sitting at computers in a makeshift command center. Water was dripping from the ceiling into an orange plastic bowl. A six-hundred-and-sixty-six-pound blue marlin was mounted on the wall, next to a satellite photograph of the parish: a long, skinny leg of land twisting out into the Gulf of Mexico. The photograph was pasted with fifteen little red triangles marking the spots where the parish's levees had been breached. After Katrina, many of the breaches had been sealed, only to be reopened by Rita.

Dokka's study, which he published in July, 2004, under the title "Rates of Vertical Displacement at Benchmarks in the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Northern Gulf Coast," showed that for decades elevations in coastal Louisiana had been systematically overstated. Heights had been calculated on the basis of "benchmarks" that were supposedly stable but which, it turned out, were themselves subsiding. Dokka's calculations showed that the fastest-sinking areas, among them the southern part of Plaquemines Parish, were losing elevation at the rate of more than an inch a year. In his study, he labelled this phenomenon an "inexorable slow disaster" whose economic effects would eventually "be felt by the entire country."

Official elevation figures are issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, through its National Geodetic Survey office. At first, NOAA resisted Dokka's findings; then it embraced them. Since elevation is a crucial factor in construction in southern Louisiana—among other things, it determines whether a home or a business qualifies for federally backed flood insurance—this shift is likely to affect practically every rebuilding project in the area. In the weeks after Katrina, NOAA officials raced around the state, trying to get out the message that the old elevation numbers were invalid. Several of them met us at the command center. We all trooped into the parish engineer's office, where some local public-works officials were waiting. A NOAA official named Ronnie Taylor handed out a two-page Xerox. On one page was a map of the parish, marked at intervals with codes, like D 194 and C 195. Each represented a benchmark. On the other, there were columns for the benchmarks' "old" elevations, the "new" elevations, and the difference between the two. All of the benchmarks had lost elevation, and while none had been lowered by more than a foot, some had come close: C 195, near the town of Port Sulphur, had lost nearly nine inches; A 152, near the town of Myrtle Grove, had lost eight. The revisions had brought several of the benchmarks down to sea level, or lower. EMPIRE AZ MK 2 was now listed at minus half an inch. J 370, in the southernmost reaches of the parish, was now minus four feet.

"These heights that we're providing, we would recommend very highly that those would be the only ones that you would use for reconstruction or rebuilding," Taylor told the men around the table. They looked glum.

"You need to specify, 'Thou shalt only use these numbers,' " Dokka emphasized.

Taylor went on to note that the new elevations, which were based on 2004 data, were probably themselves already out of date, as most of the benchmarks had continued to subside. Dokka suggested that the figures be thought of as having expiration dates, like milk cartons. In a few years, new "new" elevations would be issued.

"I don't want to be the person who pulled the rug out from under southern Louisiana," Dokka said later, as we walked back to the car. "But ultimately it's going to get so bad over here—in fifty to a hundred years, maybe sooner—that this is going to go under water."

From Belle Chasse, we headed south, ostensibly to check on some G.P.S. receivers, but really, it seemed, because everyone was interested in seeing the damage firsthand. We had been joined by Taylor and another NOAA official, Tim Osborn, and were driving in Osborn's government-issue Suburban. Since Plaquemines Parish is so narrow, it has only one major road—Highway 23—and most of it was still closed. About ten miles south of Belle Chasse, just outside Myrtle Grove, we reached the first checkpoint. An armed guard was sitting in the middle of the highway, under an awning that read "Alligator Festival."

"I like what you've done with this place," Osborn told the guard. Smiling wanly, the man waved us through.

Plaquemines Parish is one of the youngest parts of Louisiana, and has sections that are so new they do not show up on nineteenth-century maps. The parish is bisected by the Mississippi, and at its tip the river finally ends its 2,350-mile journey, splaying out into a formation that resembles the toes of a chicken and is called the Birdfoot. Highway 23 follows the contours of the river along its west bank. The road is protected by levees on both sides, but during Katrina water came in from all directions. Just beyond Myrtle Grove, we came to a spot where two barges that had been lifted by the storm surge were sitting on top of a river levee. Piles of dead fish lay on the grass. We passed a grove of citrus trees, which were turning brown from saltwater exposure, and a mobile home that had been deposited on top of a minivan. Dokka, Osborn, and Taylor had all brought cameras. At each new scene of devastation, they would lean out of the car windows and click away. In some spots, the floodwaters had receded, or been pumped out, but in others back yards and pastureland were still submerged, and water lapped at the shoulder of the highway.

As we continued south, the destruction grew more complete. In Port Sulphur, so named for its now abandoned sulfur mines, most houses had been reduced to construction debris. The few buildings still standing had lost their outer walls, so that you could look right through, into what had once been kitchens and living rooms and dens. The trees were draped with an astonishing assortment of household goods: jackets, tires, chairs, bicycles. It became something of a contest to see who could find the most amazing item in the branches. Except for an occasional Humvee full of National Guard members and some Spanish-speaking workers, we were the only people in the area. It was eerily still. (A New Orleans *Times-Democrat* account of the Mississippi flood of 1882 described this sort of post-diluvian silence as "the quiet of dissolution.") Near the town of Empire, two fishing boats, the Sea Falcon and the Sea Wolf, both a hundred and fifty feet long, had landed across all four lanes of Highway 23. After a round of picture-taking, Osborn maneuvered the car off the highway and around their hulls.

"This area is living on borrowed time," Dokka said. "I mean, it is." To check on his G.P.S. receiver, we had to climb onto the roof of a deserted school. Apparently, there had been food in the refrigerators when Katrina hit, because when we made our way through the lunchroom the smell was nauseating.

Finally, after more than two hours, we reached the Coast Guard station in Venice, just north of the Birdfoot. The building was largely intact, but insulation was draped over the sides, like Spanish moss, and the parking lot was filled with overturned boats. Osborn opened the back of the car and pulled out some M.R.E.s. Each meal had to be heated by placing it on top of a little pouch and then pouring water over it to produce an exothermic reaction. We ate and stuffed the wrappers into a plastic bag.

On the way back to Empire, Dokka spotted a dead cow hanging in a tree. The cow's body was hollowed out, but its head was bloated, making it look like something from a Surrealist painting or a nightmare. We pulled over so that everyone could take pictures. It was agreed that Dokka had won the contest.

Start to dig in Plaquemines Parish, or almost anywhere in southern Louisiana, and you will pull up peaty mud; the consistency of the region's soil has been compared to warm jello. Pretty soon, your hole will fill with water. (This makes it hard to keep things like caskets underground, which is why the dead are, as a rule, stored in vaults.) If you keep digging, eventually you will reach sand and clay. If you go on, you will reach more clay and more sand, and this process will repeat for hundreds—in some places thousands—of feet. There are no rocks in southern Louisiana, except for those that have been imported to, for example, shore up the sinking roads.

The clay is imported, too, only on a different time scale. In some form or another, the Mississippi has been flowing for tens of millions of years, and all the while it has been carrying great loads of sediment—in the eighteen-hundreds, some four hundred million tons per year—which tended to settle out where the river, slowing, emptied into the sea. In this way, what is now the Louisiana Gulf Coast was formed out of bits and pieces of Missouri and Arkansas and Kentucky and Iowa and Illinois and Minnesota.

The buildup of southern Louisiana and its wasting away are flip sides of the same deltaic process. Over time, sediments naturally compact and consolidate—or dewater—with recent layers, which are wetter, losing volume more rapidly. Once enough sediment has been deposited, the load begins to depress the earth's crust, a process known as down-warping. (Down-warping occurs so gradually that the earth is still responding to sediment deposited tens of thousands of years ago.) In areas where accretion exceeds subsidence, new land is created. But the process works against itself. When too much sediment builds up at its mouth, the river, seeking a faster route to the sea, switches course, like a hose flopping around in the grass. A new bulge of land, or delta lobe, starts to form, while the old one slowly continues to sink and compact under its own weight. In the past eight thousand years, the river has built five major lobes, some of them overlapping. Western Terrebonne Parish is what remains of the delta lobe built during the time of the Assyrians; Lafourche Parish is what's left of the lobe laid down during the Roman Empire. Many still more ancient delta lobes are now submerged. The Mississippi fan, an enormous cone of sediment that was laid down during the ice ages, now lies under the Gulf of Mexico; it is larger than the entire state of Louisiana and in some places ten thousand feet thick.

The city of New Orleans sits on a lobe—the St. Bernard—that came into being around the time of the Pyramids. To early white explorers, the spot seemed uninhabitable—"I do not see how settlers can be placed on this river," Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville wrote to the French Minister of Marine and Colonies, the Comte de Pontchartrain, in 1708—and at the same time irresistible. (Bienville would go on to found New Orleans, in 1718.) The first sections to be settled were, not surprisingly, the highest—ridges formed, paradoxically, by flooding. Before the river was reëngineered, it overflowed its banks virtually every year—sometimes more often. Heavier sediments settled out first, creating natural levees. (The term comes from the French *levée*, meaning "raised.") The French Quarter is built on such a natural levee, and so is the Garden District.

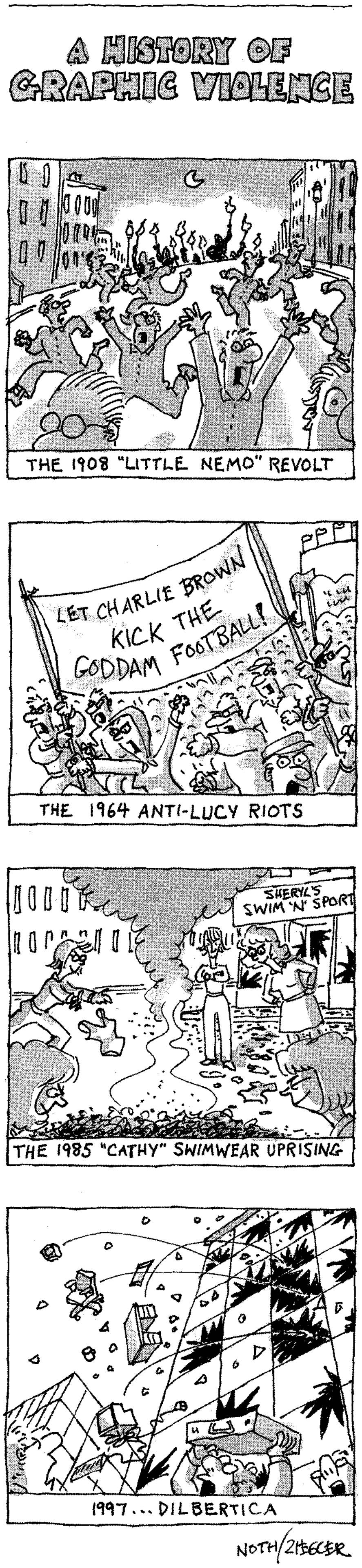
The Mississippi swung into its present course—and began to lay down Plaquemines Parish and the Birdfoot—approximately a thousand years ago. At this point, it is ready to switch direction yet again. For several decades, the river has been trying to jump its banks to follow a steeper gradient that leads to the Gulf of Mexico through the Atchafalaya River Basin, between Baton Rouge and Lafayette. The Old River Control Structure, which is twelve hundred feet long and consists of an elaborate series of dams, locks, and sluices, has prevented this from happening. But while the control structure has preserved New Orleans's viability as a port—were the river to change course, the city would face out onto slack water of the sort found in Bayou Lafourche—it has done nothing to solve the problem of land loss. Indeed, just the reverse. Instead of going into delta-building, most of the Mississippi's sediment today gets dumped beyond the Birdfoot and off the continental shelf.

The Caernarvon Freshwater Diversion Project is situated on the east bank of the Mississippi, about ten miles southeast of New Orleans, near the St. Bernard-Plaquemines Parish line. Five fifteen-foot-high white poles marked with black numerals, like a group of giant thermometers, are set into a concrete platform on the top of the levee. The poles are attached to metal gates that have been built into the levee, and these gates lead to a set of huge concrete culverts. The culverts run through the levee and empty into a canal. When the gates are opened, freshwater flows from the river through the culverts into the canal, and from there into the neighboring wetlands. Depending on how you look at things, the project is designed either to restore the river's natural tendencies or to add a whole new level of manipulation: on top of man-made flood control, man-made flooding.

A few weeks after my trip to Plaquemines, I hitched a ride to Caernarvon with some officials from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources who were heading into the wetlands to take post-Katrina measurements. It was another bright-blue day, with temperatures in the mid-eighties. (By this point, in mid-November, southern Louisiana was suffering from a drought.) At Caernarvon, we met up with a second group of officials, from the Army Corps of Engineers and the Geological Survey, who were there for the same purpose. We all got into airboats with flat bottoms and maddeningly loud propellers mounted on the back. Soon, we were zipping along through the water, which was dark and bubbly and reeked of swamp gas. The wetlands were filled with birds—egrets with long, pointed beaks; ibis with long, curved beaks; roseate spoonbills, with beaks shaped like ice-cream paddles—and also teeming with alligators. They lifted their snouts to gaze at us with bored malevolence.

The fundamental problem of southern Louisiana—the fact that making the area suitable for permanent settlement also tends to make it that much more impermanent—has been understood for many decades. In the nineteen-twenties, Percy Viosca, a Louisiana naturalist, warned that flood-control and land-reclamation efforts were "killing the goose that laid the golden egg"; he advocated that the state adopt policies to reëstablish the "natural conditions" conducive to healthy marshes. Instead, though, virtually all the practices that exacerbate land loss were allowed to continue and, in some cases, even encouraged. Swamps were drained to create agricultural fields and housing developments; this caused the peaty marsh soils to oxidize and shrink, like a drying sponge, resulting, in many instances, in new expanses of open water. Navigational channels like the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet were dug; these carried salt water into what had been freshwater marshes, killing trees and grasses and inviting erosion. Thousands of miles of canals were cut into the wetlands to facilitate oil and natural-gas exploration; much like the navigation channels, these canals wreaked havoc on the local hydrology. Where oil was found, the process of extraction caused some areas to slump—Louisiana "floats on oil like a drunkard's teeth on whiskey," A. J. Liebling once wrote—further contributing to subsidence.

Meanwhile, efforts to reverse or merely forestall wetland loss have been halting. The history of the Caernarvon project illustrates the difficulties encountered even by what is, compared with the magnitude of the problem, a relatively modest endeavor. The project was approved by Congress beginning in 1965; owing to bureaucratic inertia and state


A HISTORY OF GRAPHIC VIOLENCE
THE 1908 "LITTLE NEMO" REVOLT
LET CHARLIE BROWN KICK THE GODDAM FOOTBALL!
THE 1964 ANTI-LUCY RIOTS
SHERYL'S SWIM 'N' SPORT
THE 1985 "CATHY" SWIMWEAR UPRISING
1997... DILBERTICA
NOTH/ZIEGLER

PAUL NOTH/JACK ZIEGLER

budget cuts, it was not completed until 1991. Almost as soon as it began to operate, a new set of problems arose. Although almost no one lives in the wetlands affected by Caernarvon, some areas are leased to oyster farmers, who pay two dollars an acre for a claim that lasts fifteen years, and other areas are popular with shrimpers. In 1994, oyster farmers in the area filed a class-action suit against the state, alleging that the project had reduced the value of their leases. While the litigation dragged on, Caernarvon was operated at only a fraction of its capacity. In December, 2000, a Plaquemines Parish jury awarded five of the farmers damages of forty-eight million dollars, a verdict that, applied across the entire class, added up to more than a billion dollars. This verdict was later overturned by Louisiana's highest court, and then, with the help of Alan Dershowitz and his brother, Nathan, the reversal was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which last year finally put an end to the case by refusing to hear it. At the same time that the oyster-lease case was in litigation, shrimpers were complaining, often vociferously and to their representatives in Baton Rouge, that, because of the changes in salinity, the shrimp had stopped showing up.

Chuck Villarrubia is the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources official who oversees Caernarvon's day-to-day operations. I happened to be sharing an airboat with him. "We are trying as best we can to mitigate the conflicts," he told me. "But there's a lot of people yelling at us." On more than one occasion, Villarrubia said, he has received Caernarvon-related death threats.

There are many ways to go about wetland restoration. An area can be replanted, or built up, or enclosed to retain soil that would otherwise be washed away. New sediment can be brought in by barge, or pumped in through pipes. The Caernarvon project follows the simplest possible model: at times of high flow, the gates are opened and water floods the wetlands much as it would have before the river was contained. In addition to dumping sediment, the influx from the Mississippi pushes back salt water that is pressing up from Breton Sound. This, in turn, encourages the growth of reeds and marsh grasses, which, by dying and decaying, help build up the soil, allowing still more plants to grow, and so on. As we skittered along, Villarrubia pointed out stands of trees, mostly young willows, that hadn't been there when he first began working on the project. (Because the propellers were so loud, much of our communication on this topic had to take place through gesture.)

The wetlands in the Caernarvon outfall district are dotted with monitoring stations. On our way to the first, we passed through a large, perfectly rectilinear lake, known as Big Mar. For a short time, it had been a farm; now it was an object lesson in futility. At the station—a white plastic tube sticking up out of the muck—we all clambered off the boats and onto the nearest semi-dry land. Greg Steyer, an ecologist with the U.S.G.S., grabbed hold of an auger that looked like a skinny torpedo and plunged it into the ground. It had a hollow chamber in the middle, and, when he twisted it, it gouged out a core. He pulled the auger up and opened the chamber. There was a layer of dirt, which had the consistency of gruel, and, beneath that, a six-inch layer of clay. Steyer tossed away that core and took a new one. The same clay layer appeared again. It had been laid down, he explained, during the great Mississippi flood of 1927.

For the people who lived in and around Caernarvon—at that time a sleepy hamlet—the 1927 flood was an unprecedented disaster. During the spring of that year, extraordinarily heavy rainfall inundated some sixteen million acres of land in more than a half-dozen states. As the flood crest moved south, influential New Orleanians decided that the best way for the city to avoid catastrophe was to blow up the levee downriver—a decision that made little sense in terms of hydraulics but was nevertheless carried out. (The spot chosen for the dynamiting was just a few hundred yards from where the diversion project now stands.) In the ensuing rush of water, several thousand people—mostly trappers—lost their homes. By the perverse logic of the delta, this wholesale destruction of the human landscape sustained the natural one. Had the flood *not* occurred, the six-inch layer of clay would never have been deposited, in which case the land we were standing on might well no longer be there.

Katrina, too, flooded the wetlands, but from the opposite direction and thus to opposite effect. Propelled by the hurricane's counterclockwise winds, Katrina's storm surges swept north through Breton Sound toward New Orleans, submerging the marshes under twenty-five feet of salt water. The surge lifted mats of grasses and tossed them around like tumbleweed. It scoured away the wet, soupy soil, depositing it no one is quite sure where. All around us was evidence of the destruction. Clumps of marsh grass lay piled up in large mounds, while the plants that were still rooted in the soil had turned brown and brittle—symptoms of salt burn. "Pretty pitiful," Steyer observed, shaking his head.

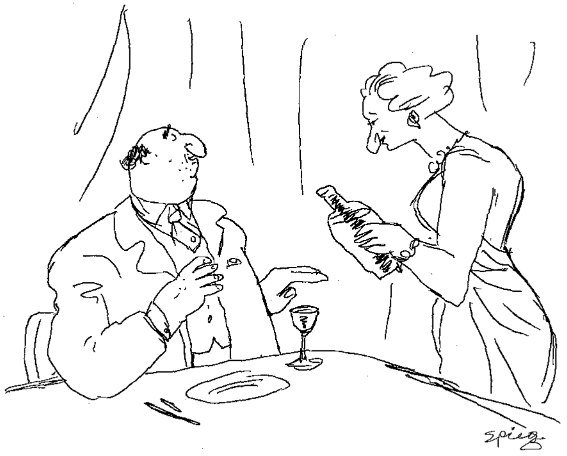
The rest of the morning was devoted to visiting more stations. At the second, nothing was growing in what was supposed to be an "emergent vegetation plot." There were, however, several nutria. These large, ratlike creatures, native to South America, were imported to Louisiana in the nineteen-thirties for the purposes of fur farming, then accidentally released into the wetlands. Nutria routinely indulge in "eat outs," during which they destroy virtually all the plant life for hundreds of square feet, and so represent yet another cause of land loss. Their droppings look like peanuts.

The day grew hotter, the air stickier. Around noon, we had lunch in the shade of a few scraggly bushes. One of the biologists had brought along an M.R.E., which the others, who were unwrapping half-steamed sandwiches, eyed enviously. As he pulled out the little heating packet, someone mentioned having heard that the exothermic reaction could be initiated with urine.

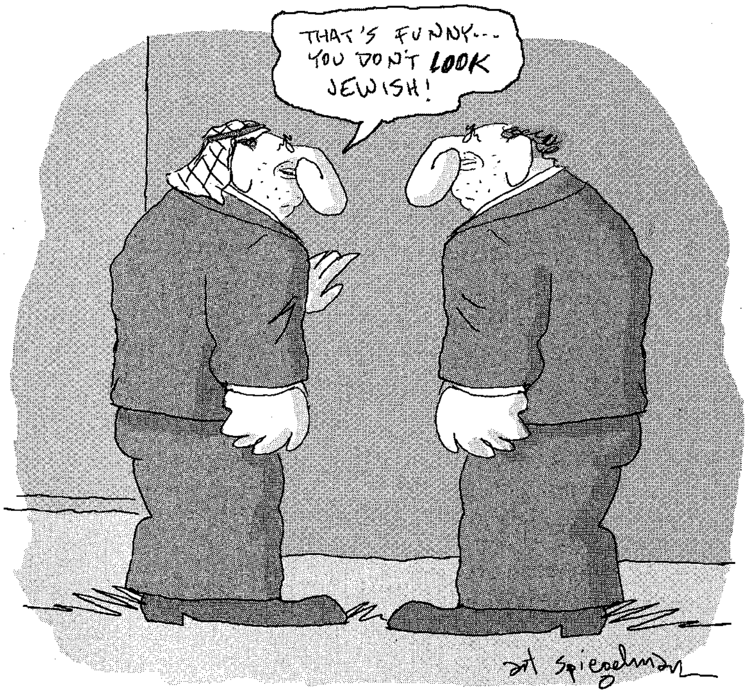
After lunch, Steyer unfurled a huge pre-Katrina satellite image of the wetlands. Everyone gathered around it. Several of the biologists had brought along post-hurricane images of the area, which had been laminated for use in the field. Even to the untrained eye, the differences were striking. Large areas that on the old map were green now showed up as black, which is to say, under water. Prior to the hurricane, there had been a hundred and thirty-three square miles of vegetated marsh in the area; according to initial estimates, the storm had eliminated thirty of them. There was a chance that some of these areas would eventually bounce back—many of the clumps of brown

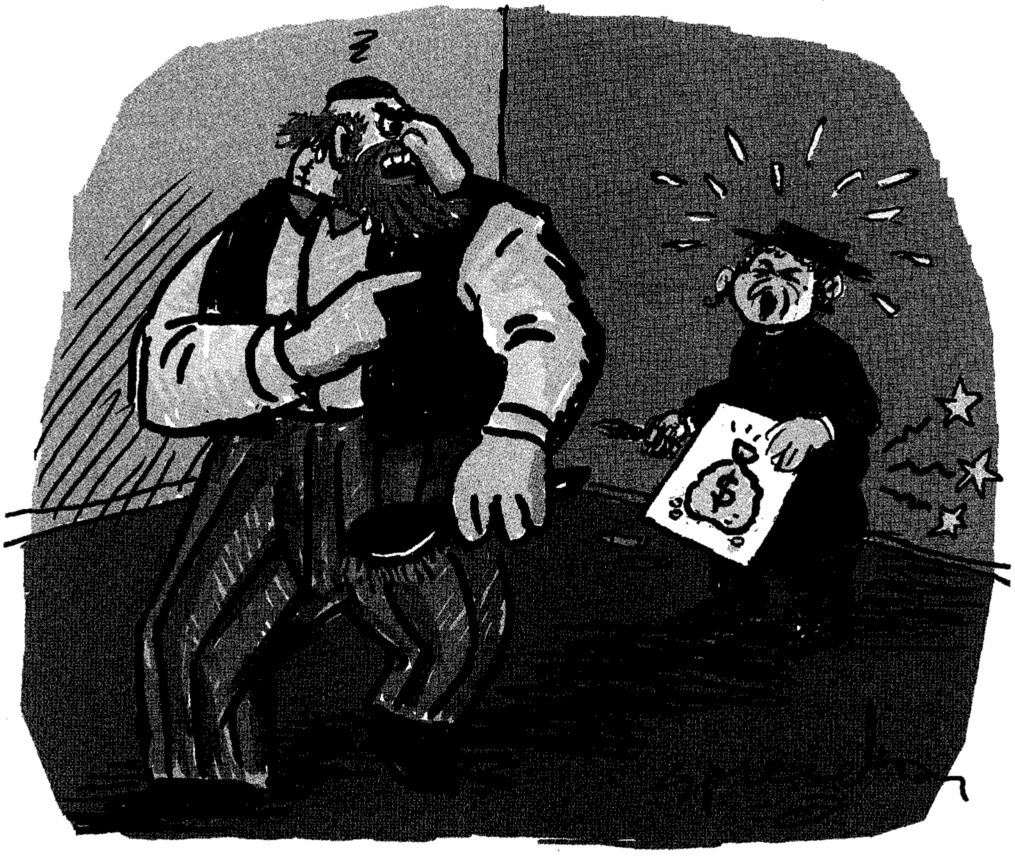
SKETCHBOOK BY ART SPIEGELMAN

THREE SUBMISSIONS FOR IRAN'S ANTI-SEMITIC CARTOON CONTEST



"No more Palestinian blood, thanks. It's bad for my cholesterol."


THAT'S FUNNY... YOU DON'T LOOK JEWISH!



"SO LET THAT BE A LESSON TO YOU, ABIE—IT IS *FORBIDDEN* TO DEPICT THE **PROFIT!**"

65
70
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SIPRESS

marsh grass were already sporting tiny green shoots—and it was possible that the soil that had been scoured away from one area would encourage new growth in another. In general, though, Steyer was pessimistic. "I can tell you the amount that we lost in Breton Sound was bad," he said. "There is not going to be a net breakeven. Not at all."

Katrina began, as hurricanes tend to do, as a broad area of low pressure. On the afternoon of August 23rd, it deepened into a tropical depression—the twelfth of the season—centered in the southeastern Bahamas. By the morning of the 24th, it had turned into a tropical storm, and was given a name. Katrina headed west, passing to the south of Grand Bahama Island and across the tip of Florida before pushing out over the Gulf of Mexico. At 6:10 A.M. on Monday, August 29th, the hurricane made landfall in Plaquemines Parish, just north of the Birdfoot. It passed over eastern St. Bernard Parish and Lake Borgne before making landfall again, almost exactly on the Mississippi-Louisiana border. Thanks to Katrina's northward trajectory and counterclockwise rotation, the most destructive winds were on its eastern side; Pascagoula, Mississippi, for example, reported gusts of a hundred and twenty-four miles an hour. In New Orleans, sustained winds never got above a hundred and ten miles an hour, producing the impression that the city had been spared.

Katrina was an extremely large storm—hurricane-force winds extended more than eighty-five miles from its center—and at landfall it registered one of the lowest central pressures on record: nine hundred and twenty millibars. On its approach to New Orleans, Katrina pushed water from the Gulf into Lake Borgne, and from there into Lake Pontchartrain, raising the level in the lake by eleven feet in nine hours. Then, as the hurricane continued north, its winds drove the water to the south, into the canals that link the lake to the city. The effect was like filling a bucket and kicking a hole in it. The flood walls on the Seventeenth Street and London Avenue canals began to fail, inundating low-lying neighborhoods, like Lakeview and Gentilly. At the same time, water from the Gulf was being channelled into the Industrial Canal through MR-GO. As the levees along the Industrial Canal burst open, the Lower Ninth Ward was practically obliterated. The next day, eighty per cent of the city was under water.

Although almost no one in or outside New Orleans seemed prepared for it, Katrina was probably the most comprehensively predicted catastrophe in American history. In the past few decades, storm-surge models have become increasingly sophisticated and the computers they run on increasingly powerful. When researchers began to adapt the models to New Orleans, they became convinced, as one of them put it to me, that "we had this train wreck imminent." The city's levees had been designed to protect it from what the Army Corps of Engineers calls a "standard project hurricane"—roughly, a fast-moving Category 3 storm. (Since fast-moving storms have less time to pile up water, they're generally less dangerous than slow-moving ones.) But not all of the levees met this objective, even on paper. A project to upgrade them, begun in the aftermath of Hurricane Betsy, in 1965, was repeatedly delayed by funding cuts; by 1995, it was still twenty years from completion. Meanwhile, as the levees were slowly being raised, the land underneath them continued to subside. The models showed that, even if New Orleans's defenses held up, many possible hurricanes could overwhelm them, and that in the fastest-subsiding coastal parishes a relatively minor storm could prove devastating. Joseph Suhayda, a coastal oceanographer at L.S.U. who was working with a model that had been developed for FEMA, became so alarmed by the results he was seeing that he began to buttonhole state and local emergency-management officials.

"I talked about it every place I could," Suhayda, who is now retired, told me. "It was a proactive effort to get the word out, to make it an issue." Some griped that he was just scaremongering—"I've had people complain, 'Who the hell is this guy, he's causing trouble,'" Suhayda said—but others began to take notice. In October, 2001, *Scientific American* ran a story that described New Orleans as "a disaster waiting to happen," and warned that "only massive reengineering of southeastern Louisiana can save the city." The following year, the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* published a five-part, fifty-thousand-word series entitled "Washing Away," which carried much the same message, and, the year after that, *Civil Engineering*, the official publication of the American Society of Civil Engineers, asked, "Can any defense ultimately protect a city that is perpetually sinking?" Beginning in the summer of 2004, state officials held a series of planning exercises for a hypothetical storm they named Hurricane Pam. Pam was designed as a strong, slow-moving Category 3 hurricane that made landfall slightly to the west of New Orleans, a scenario that put the city on the storm's more dangerous eastern side. (Katrina, which reached Category 5 strength over the Gulf, had weakened to a slow-moving Category 3 storm by the time it passed to the east of the city.) For the purposes of the exercise, it was assumed that the city's levees would hold, but the models predicted that Pam's storm surge would be sufficient to overtop them. According to the script prepared in advance of the exercise, Pam resulted in 61,290 fatalities and 179,890 injuries. It washed coffins out of their vaults and sent them floating down the streets. A follow-up study on Pam was planned but never took place, apparently owing to a lack of funding.

The North Atlantic hurricane season officially begins on June 1st and ends six months later, on November 30th. The 2005 season started with Tropical Storm Arlene, which formed in the northwest Caribbean Sea on June 8th. By July 5th, there were already four named storms—a record. By July 12th, there were five named storms—another record—and by July 31st there were seven, a third record. The season ended unusually late; Tropical Storm Zeta did not form until December 30th and persisted into the new year, finally dissipating on January 6, 2006. All told, there were twenty-seven named storms in 2005, or, at least, storms that would have been given names if the National Hurricane Center hadn't run out of them. (The Hurricane Center chooses twenty-one storm names per year, and generally needs only eleven or twelve of them.) Of these twenty-seven storms, fifteen grew into full-blown hurricanes, another record. Typically, three or four Category 5 hurricanes form in the North Atlantic in the course of a decade; in 2005, there were three in the course of a single year. Needless to say, this was also a record.

Hurricanes draw their strength from the warm surface waters of the ocean. As sea-surface temperatures rise, more energy becomes available to them. It follows that global warming should lead to an increase in hurricane intensity, but to what extent such an increase could be detected was still very much a matter of debate last spring, when Judith Curry and Peter Webster, climate scientists at Georgia Tech, decided to investigate.

Curry, who is the chair of Georgia Tech's School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, is a small woman with shoulder-length brown hair and a brisk, no-nonsense manner. On the day that I went to visit her, last month, the building where she has her office had been sealed off by the police because of a gas leak nearby. No one had bothered to evacuate the people who were already inside the building, though, so Curry came out and led me around to an unguarded entrance in the back. "Smell that gas?" she asked cheerily, as we made our way under the "CAUTION" tape.

When she and Webster began their study, Curry told me once we were seated in her office, it wasn't because *they expected to find anything very interesting.* If storms were growing more violent in one part of the globe, this was, they suspected, probably balanced out by less activity in others. They set about assembling data on every single hurricane—or typhoon, or cyclone—that had formed in the North Pacific, the South Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the North Atlantic since satellite measurement began, in 1970. (Because the wind shear is too strong and sea-surface temperatures are lower in the South Atlantic, hurricanes do not usually form there; however, in March, 2004, for the first time ever recorded, one did.) The survey revealed precisely the sort of correlation that Curry and Webster had thought didn't exist. Between 1975 and 2004, tropical sea-surface temperatures increased by roughly one degree Fahrenheit. During this same period, the number of storms reaching Category 4 or Category 5 status nearly doubled. The increase in hurricane intensity was statistically significant in all ocean basins. "It just sort of hits you over the head," Curry said. "There is no way you can explain this increase in every single ocean by natural, cyclical variability."

As it happened, at around the same time that Curry and Webster were at work on their study another researcher, Kerry Emanuel, at M.I.T., was conducting a similar study. Although Emanuel was analyzing different data—he used mainly wind-speed measurements taken by aircraft—he reached the same conclusion. His study came out in *Nature* four weeks before Katrina. Curry and Webster's paper appeared in *Science* two weeks after Katrina. The following week, Rita struck. At that point, things "just sort of exploded," Curry said.

Eventually, Webster stopped by, and the conversation turned to the future of the Gulf Coast. "Are you aware of the size of Katrina's storm surge?" Webster asked. "On the Mississippi coast, it was twenty-eight feet high. Up the Biloxi River, twenty-four miles inland, I think it was twenty-four feet high. I don't know if you remember seeing the pictures of the tsunami versus the pictures of the Mississippi coast, but they were exactly the same. Now, *that's* going to happen again.

"What we're seeing now is the base for what's going to occur in the future," he went on. "There will be ups and downs, but don't expect us to go back to a nineteen-seventies level of hurricanes." Webster called rebuilding New Orleans under these conditions "ludicrous."

Curry pointed out that, thanks to global warming, not only were hurricanes becoming more intense but sea levels were rising, making storm surges that much more dangerous. "What used to be the once-in-a-lifetime flood, you could see every season," she observed. In terms of rebuilding New Orleans, Curry said, "It's a complex issue. But, speaking from the climate and the environmental-science perspective, a hundred years from now there's just no way there's going to be a city there. You just know that isn't going to happen. We can fight it. We can rebuild it and wait until it gets wiped out again. If you look at the geological record, these coastal areas come and go. Sometimes they're under water and sometimes they're not. Maybe a colossal engineering effort can do something, but at some point that is going to fail. This is just the way geology and climate work. You can't fight it forever."

The next day, I flew down to New Orleans to attend a meeting of a group called the Bring New Orleans Back commission, which was beginning to unveil its "action plan" for rebuilding the city. The Bring New Orleans Back commission was appointed by Mayor Ray Nagin in September, 2005, and it exists in an uneasy relationship to the Louisiana Recovery Authority, which was appointed by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, and to the many federal relief agencies whose efforts are being coördinated by Donald Powell, an appointee of President Bush. The B.N.O.B. commission had spent two months drafting the plan, and, in the days leading up to the meeting, many of its details had leaked out, causing widespread alarm. The meeting was held in a ballroom at the Sheraton Hotel, on Canal Street, which can hold chairs for about three hundred people. At least twice that many showed up, and when standing room ran out they hovered near the doors; from where I was seated, in the middle of the room, I could hear a dull roar emanating from the lobby.

The meeting began with a presentation by John Beckman, a consultant from Philadelphia, who had been hired to work with the commission's urban-planning committee. Beckman flashed a series of slides on two huge screens flanking the podium at the front of the ballroom. One showed a map of New Orleans superimposed on a map of Washington, D.C. The area flooded by Katrina covered most of the District, including the White House and Capitol Hill, and sprawled east into Maryland and west into Virginia. Another slide showed southeastern Louisiana, with areas of land loss expected by 2050 outlined in red. New Orleans appeared in brown, surrounded by big red blobs to the east, west, and south. "So we're in a threatened position," Beckman said.

The slides kept coming. The Bring New Orleans Back commission was calling for a "complete redesign" of the city's flood-control system, including a comprehensive program of coastal and wetland restoration, the closing of MR-GO, the relocation of pumping stations to Lake Pontchartrain, the completion of locks on the Industrial Canal, and the construction of new levees to protect New Orleans from a Category 5 storm. It was also advocating the construction of a light-rail system that would crisscross the city, and the creation of a new public authority—the Crescent City Redevelopment Corporation—to disburse federal funds. Finally, Beckman got to a slide titled "Neighborhood Rebuilding Strategy." The crowd perked up.

The slide showed a map of the city, with some areas colored yellow and others colored tan. Yellow neighborhoods were labelled "immediate opportunity areas." These areas, which included the French Quarter, the Garden District, and the Central Business District, had little or no flood damage, and the commission was recommending that they be reoccupied right away. All of the "immediate opportunity areas" were, not coincidentally, built on high ground—either the natural levees of the Mississippi or levees formed by now defunct distributaries of the river, like Bayou Metairie and Bayou Gentilly. Tan areas were low-lying neighborhoods, like Lakeview, New Orleans East, Gentilly, and the Lower Ninth Ward, which had taken on several feet of water. These were labelled "neighborhood planning areas." Neighborhood planning areas would be the subject of four months of public meetings, after which it would be determined—how, exactly, was not specified—whether they should be rebuilt or abandoned. During this four-month period, the commission was recommending a moratorium on building permits for tan areas. After Beckman finished with his slides, there was a rush for the microphone at the center of the room.

"Our neighborhood is ready to come home," a man who identified himself as the president of the Lakeview Civic Improvement Association declared. "We want to be able to go down to City Hall and get a permit now. We have the means to help ourselves. So don't get in our way."

A woman said, "I heard nothing really for the Lower Ninth Ward. Those are my family, my friends, my neighbors. I've been down there—yes, I'm telling my age—fifty-nine years, and I know who came and I know who went. I'm here for those persons who could not get back to New Orleans. I don't think it's right that you try to take our property. Because, like I say, over my dead body."

"This is a big, audacious plan," a second man from Lakeview said. "It was put together by obviously very brilliant people. But guess what? You missed the boat." By my count, of the twenty-two speakers, twenty-one came out against the commission's recommendations. The opposition seemed to cut across all racial, ethnic, and class lines.

"Mr. Mayor, I have to tell it like it goes," a man from New Orleans East said. "If I have to suit up like the Army and protect my land, that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to die on mine."

When the meeting ended, I headed downstairs to a press conference. I had been told that Nagin would be speaking, but that turned out not to be the case. (This was a few days before the Mayor suggested that Katrina and Rita were signs that "God is mad at America" and declared that New Orleans was destined to become a "chocolate" city.) Instead, Joseph Canizaro, the chairman of the commission's urban-planning committee, fielded questions. During the meeting, Canizaro, a developer, had come in for a great deal of personal criticism—"Mr. Joe Canizaro, I don't know you, but I hate you," one man had told him—but if this troubled him, he wasn't letting it show.

"There's no question that if you're going to have two hundred thousand less residents in this community there's going to be shrinkage," he said. "People don't want to hear that."

The Sheraton, along with most of New Orleans's other high-rise hotels, sits on the edge of the French Quarter. (Underneath the buildings are huge pilings driven into sand.) By the time of the Bring New Orleans Back meeting, in mid-January, most of the stores in the Quarter had reopened, in a halfhearted sort of way. In addition to T-shirts with the usual slogans, like "The Big Easy" and "I Don't Do Mornings," the souvenir shops had stocked new ones that said "F⚜CK FEMA," and in the evenings the bars were packed with contractors and federal employees.

One day, I decided to walk from the Quarter to Lakeview. I headed out along Esplanade Avenue, a wide boulevard that follows a natural ridge and is lined with stately nineteenth-century homes. Most of the shops and restaurants along Esplanade had placards in the windows announcing that they were back in business; however, there didn't seem to be much business going on. Few of the houses appeared to be occupied, despite the lawn signs that read "We're Home!" or "I Am Coming Home!" or "I Will Rebuild / I Am New Orleans."

After about two hours, I reached City Park, which was filled with scruffy encampments for workers who had come to help with, or maybe just profit from, the cleanup. There was also a huge tent that announced, "Jesus Cares and So Do We: Free Food/Comidas Gratis." Inside, the place was mostly empty, but there were enough tables and chairs to seat several hundred. A man standing in front of a display of Bibles explained that the prospect of work in New Orleans had attracted many people who were essentially homeless. "It's like the gold rush," he said. I passed the New Orleans Museum of Art, which was closed, and the Botanical Gardens, which were also gated shut.

By the time I got to Lakeview, the sun had begun to set. On an otherwise deserted block, a woman was sorting through the remains of her father's house. The furniture was piled up on the curb. The floodwaters, which in parts of Lakeview reached a height of ten feet, had turned everything—sofas, dining-room chairs, mattresses—the same sludge-brown color. A taped-up refrigerator was oozing sludge-brown slime. The woman pointed to her own house, across the street. She was living in Texas, and unsure what to do next. "It would be stupid to sink money back into these houses if next hurricane season the same thing is going to happen," she said. I had been hoping to find a bus or a taxi so that I wouldn't have to walk back to my hotel in the dark, but the only people driving around were construction workers and cops, so I ended up hitching a ride downtown in a squad car. Before Katrina, it was hard to know what your elevation was, but now the water line around the houses—New Orleanians refer to this as the "bathtub ring"—gives it away. As we drove toward the river, the line gradually dropped lower and lower until, just a few blocks before my hotel, it disappeared entirely.

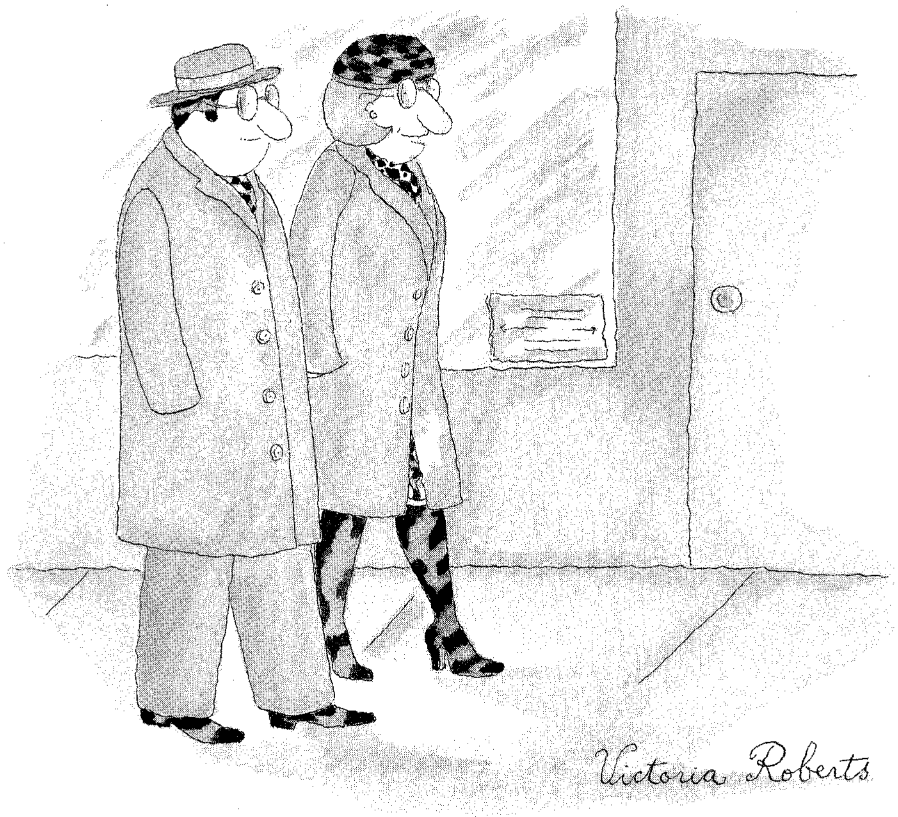
The following day, I headed east instead of west, and took a walk around the Lower Ninth Ward. During Katrina, the Lower Ninth had remained relatively dry, until suddenly, after what sounded like a series of explosions, the water started rushing in. The explosions were, presumably, the noise of the flood walls giving way, but they led to rumors, which persist to this day, that the levees had been deliberately dynamited, as they were in Caernarvon in 1927.

Walking through the wrecked and silent neighborhood, I couldn't help thinking of Leeville. Eventually, on Flood Street, I met three men standing in front of a white shotgun house. The house had been washed off its foundation and was sitting about ten feet away from the concrete steps that used to lead up to it. Beside the steps was a small bush, now dead. Two of the men, Percy Johnson and Solomon Johnson, Jr., were brothers. The third, Solomon Johnson, Sr., who owned the house, was their father. Before Katrina, Solomon, Jr., who lives in Jefferson Parish, had picked up his father, and they had driven to Dallas and then all the way to Percy's home, in Oakland, California. This was the first time since the storm that Solomon, Sr., had been back to Flood Street. He was leaning heavily against a chain-link fence.

Percy and Solomon, Jr., had both grown up in the Lower Ninth, and in 1965 they had ridden out Hurricane Betsy in a two-story house a few blocks away. "Listening to the Mayor saying, 'Come back,' once you come back and see this city, you see he's just saying that stuff," Percy observed. "It's hard to fathom." He gestured toward his father's house and the house next to it, which had also been swept off its foundation, and a third house, which was listing crazily. "Would you want to rebuild this? I mean, really? What happens next September? Every year, it's going to be the same thing."

Percy turned to his father and asked him if he thought he would return. The old man shook his head.

"No," Percy said. "Let it go." ♦



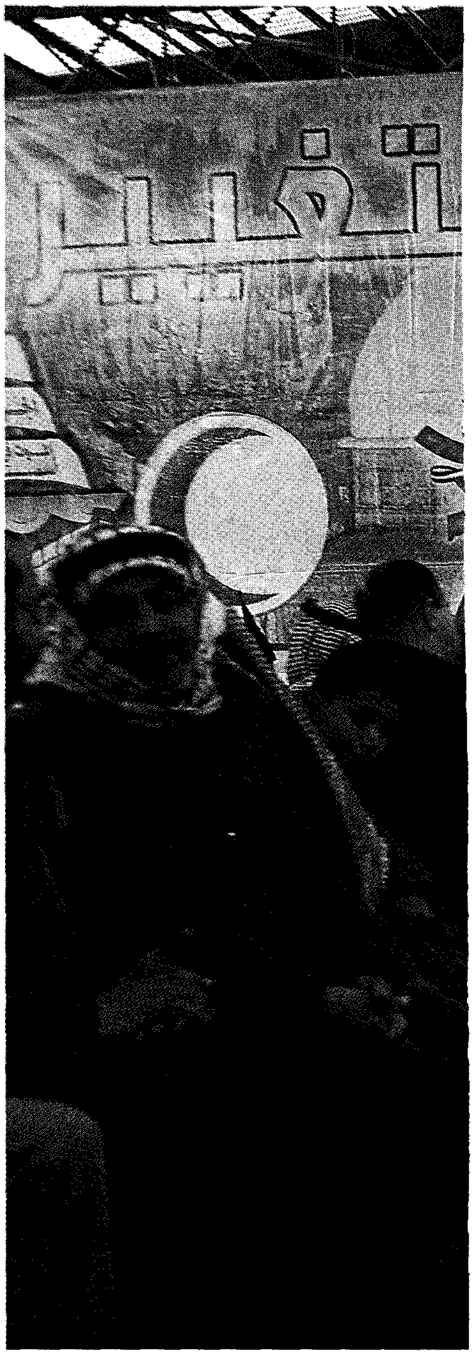
"I agreed to 'for better' and 'for worse,' but never to 'for mysterious' and 'withholding.'"

LETTER FROM THE WEST BANK

THE DEMOCRACY GAME

Hamas comes to power in Palestine.

BY DAVID REMNICK


A celebration of Hamas's election victory in

Every Friday, just before midday prayers, thousands of men and women in the West Bank town of Dura stop to gossip and shop in the market stalls that lead to the steps of the Grand Mosque. I visited Dura on the first Friday after Hamas had swept the Palestinian elections. And yet that morning all the talk was of cartoons: a dozen caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad had been published in the Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten*, igniting a worldwide paroxysm of apocalyptic hysteria that brought into use, once more, that "Star Wars"-like phrase "a clash of civilizations." The imam at the Dura Grand Mosque is a man in his late forties named Nayef Rajoub. Although Sheikh Nayef is a leader of Hamas and the top vote-getter in the entire West Bank, his supporters told me that he, too, was focussed on the cartoons. He would be speaking that day on the Danish caricatures as a "weapon of the Western Crusaders."

Outside the mosque, I met a group of people standing around a fruit-and-vegetable store run by a man called Eichmann Abu Atwan. I thought I'd misheard his name, but he smiled, showed his identity card, and said, "Eichmann. Like the Nazi." His father had named him during the trial of Adolf Eichmann, in Jerusalem in 1961. "He was an early fighter, killing Israelis in the seventies," Eichmann said proudly. "And my brother was such a fierce fighter that a Syrian paper compared him to Abdel-Aziz al-Rantisi"—one of the founders of Hamas. Eichmann was a supporter of Fatah, the Palestinian nationalist group that Yasir Arafat founded some fifty years ago, and, like everyone else I'd been talking to in the occupied territories, he said that Hamas had won for a variety of reasons: the financial corruption of Fatah and its leadership; the utter failure of the Oslo process; a marked increase in Islamic practice throughout Gaza and the West Bank; Hamas's dual mastery in providing social services for Palestinians and launching armed assaults on the Israelis. "Time has run out for Fatah," Eichmann said.

As the muezzin summoned the people of Dura to the mosque, Nayef's fraternal twin, Yasir, stopped by the store. "Are you all coming to hear the Sheikh?" he said. Like Nayef, Yasir had been affiliated with Hamas from the start, but their older brother, Jibril Rajoub, was one of Arafat's most powerful aides and a Fatah lord. Jibril had run the Preventive Security Service in the West Bank, and he was one of the losers in the elections.

Prayers began at eleven-thirty, and we filed into the mosque and knelt down. The walls were whitewashed. A dozen fluorescent tubes dangled low from the ceiling, giving off a vague yellow light. The room was filled entirely with men, but I was hardly inconspicuous. My translator, an aspiring young journalist from the West Bank named Khaldoun, quickly came to realize that his principal task, after rendering the Sheikh's sermon into English, was to explain to all who inquired (and many did) that the foreign visitor was "not Danish." Al Jazeera and the other Arab-language television stations had broadcast fiery protests throughout Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

"Danish?" a man asked me.

Khaldoun responded with a prolonged explanation featuring the word "Am-rika," which has not been something to brag about in recent years, but this time it did the trick.

Sheikh Nayef has a graying beard, close-cropped hair, and a tranquil, strangely distant gaze. His posture was as straight as the microphone stand before him. I was told that outside the mosque his personality was shy, even remote—a marked contrast to his worldly and fierce-looking brother Jibril—but he soon rose to a register of high dudgeon in his sermon. The Danish cartoons, the Sheikh said, were reminiscent of the calumnies hurled at the Prophet fourteen hundred years ago. Muhammad "was accused of being a magician, of being insane. The same thing is happening now in Denmark, in France, although many mosques in Europe are spreading his message. . . . What happened in Denmark is an offense against Muhammad and his followers. It is an

bron, which is one of the most purely Islamic cities in the occupied territories. Photographs by Kai Wiedenhöfer.

act of aggression against us and against our feelings."

The Sheikh was not about to get into the origins of the demonstrations, how they had been fanned not only by an imam in Copenhagen and various jihadi groups but also by regimes, like the Saudis', that make a show of their piety in order to placate their Islamist subjects. "That's not my topic today," he said. His theme was power and humiliation, Western offense and Islamic will. The cartoon affair, he said, was yet another episode in the Crusaders' assault on the faith, and the reason for "the Prophet's humiliation is the weakness of our nation." The demonstrations proved that Hamas and the Islamic movement around the world were unimpressed by such "excuses" as freedom of speech, and were absolutely determined to reject the pieties of "the heathen."

The Sheikh continued, "The people who bow down to the White House and to the Western way of life must all wake up and realize that this life is not suitable for us. Today we are told to accept our enemies, to give up our principles, to give up resistance, and do the same as the previous government"—the Palestinian Authority under Fatah. "But that is not our model. Our model is the Prophet Muhammad. What did the previous government get from compromise? It got failure, the denial of our rights, a blockade—Arafat was caught in a blockade. We have no partner in Israel. A people with principles will not repeat this failure. If our people repeat this, the next thing will be the Israelis telling us to stop praying, to stop fasting, to change our names, to take off the *hijab*. We will not repeat these mistakes. Palestine is for the

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"Have you got anything that doesn't look like a pressure gauge on the Titanic?"

• •

Muslims, and no one can give it up.... Those who injure God and his Prophet will suffer now and after death."

Dura is a town in the region of Hebron, and Hebron is the largest city in the West Bank. It is also one of the most purely Islamic cities in the occupied territories, and a center of terror. One reason for the extraordinary tension in Hebron, beyond the general privations of the nearly four-decades-long occupation, is the presence, amid a hundred and fifty thousand Palestinians, of five hundred Jewish settlers protected by more than two thousand Israeli troops. On the Jewish holiday of Purim in 1994, a doctor and settler from Brooklyn, Baruch Goldstein, opened fire with an assault rifle on Arabs praying at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, killing twenty-nine and setting off riots and reprisals all over the region. A few years ago, at the height of the Al Aqsa intifada, Jihad, a soccer team sponsored by a local mosque, instituted a rigorous training schedule: the players fasted on Mondays and Thursdays, pledged daily allegiance to Hamas, and practiced nearly every afternoon wearing jerseys bearing a hand brandishing an axe and the inscription "Al Jihad: Prepare for Them." The team's fame relied only secondarily on an impressive record on the field. Eight team members, including the player-coach, carried out suicide bombing operations, one after the other, killing more than twenty people and wounding dozens more. The city exhausted its sense of hope years ago. What now greets every visitor on the road running south from Jerusalem into Hebron is a huge green banner reading, "Welcome to Hamas City!"

Hamas, which was founded in 1987, during the first intifada, and is considered a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States, and the European Union, won seventy-four of the hundred and thirty-two seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Fatah won only forty-three. Hamas swept the slate in the Hebron region, taking nine of nine seats. Ever since Arafat signed the Oslo accords, in 1993, and the Palestinian leadership ended its long exile in Tunis to establish the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, he had used the leaders of Fatah, men like Jibril Rajoub, to make sure that Islamists like Nayef Rajoub did not extend their influence beyond the mosque. Jibril made his bones as a resistance fighter by spending seventeen years of his youth in Israeli prisons—much of that time for throwing a dud grenade at a convoy of Israeli soldiers—but his political prospects in middle age have been dashed. As Preventive Security chief, he jailed members of Hamas and other Islamist groups. Soon it is likely that Hamas will control Preventive Security—its five thousand troops and its arms.

The Rajoub family was conservative and provincial, but not especially religious. Nayef became devout when he studied Islamic law in Jordan. Yasir, who is a director of an Islamic charity that looks after orphans, has been arrested nine times and spent a total of eleven years in Israeli jails. In 1992, he and Nayef, along with more than four hundred other members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, were forcibly deported by Israel to the mountain village of Marj al-Zahour, in southern Lebanon, where they lived in tents for a year until the government let them go home. The meetings and discussions conducted among the deportees helped form the core of the Islamist leadership that is now coming to power; the Islamists called their Lebanese exile "Ibn Taymiyya University," referring to a medieval Islamic thinker. Seven of the nine Hamas candidates in Hebron had been among the deportees. When I asked Yasir Rajoub about his brother Jibril, he smiled magnanimously and said that the family was close and the brothers' disagreements were "nothing personal."

"Jibril even arrested me and detained me for a month," he said. "I was taken to Jericho," where Preventive Security had its offices and jail cells. "Others were tortured in that jail, but not me—maybe because Jibril is my brother. When the Israelis arrested us, Jibril tried to look after us. He sent money to my family."

After the midday prayers, Sheikh Nayef accepted congratulations for his sermon on the steps of the mosque and in the market stalls. He shook hands, blessed children, and then, because he does not own a car, started looking for a ride home. He invited me along for lunch.

"Jibril is rich, but the Sheikh is poor, a simple man," one of his admirers told me. "He had to seek a loan just to pay the fee to get his name on the election ballot.” The Fatah chieftains are known in the territories for skimming aid money and for taking kickbacks on businesses like oil, gas, and concrete. Their opulent houses, on the beach in Gaza, in the hills of the West Bank, mock the crumbling apartment blocks of their subjects.

The Sheikh’s modest house squats at the end of a pitted dirt road on the outskirts of Dura. A group of women, including the Sheikh’s wife, daughters, and nieces, were in the garage tending a gas stove and stacking loaves of pita; in a cauldron they were boiling hunks of mutton and rice. With some of his children trailing behind him, the Sheikh led his guests—family members, aides, and friends from the mosque—into the house, to a room furnished only with carpets and a floor lamp. A teen-aged son spread several oilcloths over the floor and another laid out plates and platters of food.

“Go ahead,” the Sheikh said. “It’s not easy preaching for so long. Let’s eat for a while and then we’ll talk.”

It is an irony of history that the first Islamist party in the Arab world to come to power in democratic elections is based not in Cairo or Amman but, rather, in the territories occupied by the Jewish state. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan have kept Islamists in their countries at bay by alternating repression, co-option, and limited access to meaningless ballots; Mubarak and Abdullah were just as dismayed as the Israelis to see the rise of Hamas on their borders.

Israel and the United States are already discussing schemes to isolate and destabilize the Palestinian Authority if Hamas refuses to recognize Israel and renounce violence. According to a report by Steven Erlanger in the *Times*, the Israelis could cause a financial crisis in the Palestinian territories by refusing to hand over the more than fifty million dollars a month in taxes and customs duties that they collect on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. They could make economic life even more arduous by tightening control on the movement of goods and workers between Israel and the territories. Western governments have said that they, too, could discontinue financial aid. These moves might result in a billion-dollar annual deficit leaving the Palestinian Authority unable to pay its hundred and forty thousand employees, who support more than a third of the Palestinian population. If Hamas decides to rebel rather than yield to outside pressure, that could lead to yet another armed conflict with Israel—a third intifada. The Israelis are gambling that Hamas—which won the elections without a majority of the votes and gained more support for its promises of reform than for its extremist views on Israel—would rather compromise than be forced to choose between poverty and war.

Islamist resistance movements appeared in Palestine well before the creation of Israel. The military battalions of Hamas are named for Izz al-Din al-Qassam, a Syrian-born sheikh who, during the Mandate period, carried out numerous attacks on British and Jewish officials. (He was killed by the British in 1935.) In one sermon he said, “Nothing will save us but our arms.”

The Muslim Brotherhood, the root organization of Hamas and of nearly every contemporary Islamist group in the Arab world, was founded in 1928 by a schoolteacher named Hassan al-Banna, who decried both English colonial rule and secular Arab nationalism. For Banna and the Muslim Brothers, the Koran was both spiritual guide and worldly constitution. In the nineteen-sixties, as the Brotherhood gained popularity, the Egyptian ruler Gamal Abdel Nasser cracked down, trying and executing the group’s most influential and radical thinker, Sayyid Qutb.

In the same series of arrests, the Egyptian police briefly imprisoned a young Gazan sheikh named Ahmed Yassin. When, following the 1967 Six-Day War, Gaza became Israeli-occupied territory, Sheikh Yassin set up a range of charities and social-service organizations, and took over professional associations and the Islamic University of Gaza, all of which were linked to the authority of the mosques. Because thousands of Palestinians worked each day in Israeli cities like Tel Aviv, Yassin was obsessed with the whore-of-Babylon influence that such places might have on his people. In 1973, he started the Islamic Center, the Al-Mujamma al-Islami, whose aim was to strengthen the authority of Islam over the population.

“In those days, Yassin’s concern was men and women swimming together,” Emmanuel Sivan, one of Israel’s leading scholars of modern Islam, told me. Yassin’s emphasis was on *da’wa*—social work and preaching—and he skillfully attracted aid from local donors, the Palestinian diaspora, and other Islamists abroad. The Israeli government, which was pouring its resources into combating Arafat, determined that the Islamists

“I’ve been selected to pay another electricity bill.”

were more of a threat to the P.L.O. than to Israel, and so did little to get in Yassin's way. "Israel operated on the simple Western logic of supporting the rival of your enemy," said Shaul Mishal, a professor at Tel Aviv University and the co-author of a scholarly history, "The Palestinian Hamas." "That strategy did not last long."

By the early eighties, many disaffected young men among the Palestinian Islamists were getting involved in the violent resistance to Israel, which was dominated by P.L.O. fighters. To keep them within the authority of the mosques, Yassin and his associates began importing arms and organizing militias of their own. When, in December, 1987, the intifada began—first in the Jabalia refugee camp, in Gaza, then throughout the occupied territories—the Islamists joined the rebellion full force, and Hamas, an acronym for Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya, the Islamic Resistance Movement, was born. ("Hamas" means "zeal.")

The Hamas charter, a nine-thousand-word document adopted by the leadership in August, 1988, remains the group's ideological foundation, melding Islamic fundamentalism with a national movement. From the start, the P.L.O. had included a range of ideologies and tendencies, among them Arab nationalism and Marxism, but Hamas rejected such "foreign" influence. In its charter, historical Palestine—the territory *min al-nahr ila al-bahr,* from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean—is declared part of the Islamic *waqf* ("endowment"), "consecrated for future Muslim generations until Judgment Day," and indivisible. To relinquish any part of the land—in other words, to permit the presence of an alien Jewish state—is forbidden. Hamas "strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine," the charter reads, for, under the Jews, "the state of truth has disappeared and been replaced by the state of evil."

The Hamas charter also reflects an unabashedly anti-Semitic, conspiracy-based view of regional and world history. Article 22 asserts that the Jewish people have "ignited revolutions" throughout the world from 1789 to 1917. Jews triggered the First World War in order to destroy the Islamic caliphate and the Second World War in order to make "huge profits from trading war materiel." In short, "No war broke out anywhere without their fingerprints on it." The Jews also have formed "secret organizations" and "destructive spying" agencies—Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and others—to promote the Zionist project, which "has no limits. . . . After Palestine it will strive to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates." This plan is "outlined in 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,' " the tsarist-era forgery of a Jewish plan for world domination.

The charter's view of negotiations and "the so-called peaceful solutions" is unambiguous. "There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad. The initiatives, proposals, and international conferences are but a waste of time and sheer futility."

After the first intifada and the advent of the Oslo process, in 1993, Arafat became wary of Hamas and its refusal to accept the peace process, Israel's right to exist, or, above all, his authority in Gaza and the West Bank. According to Mishal's book, Arafat once referred to Hamas as a "Zulu tribe," an allusion to the Inkatha movement, which refused to come under the command of Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress. Arafat also found himself competing with Hamas for money; when he supported Iraq in the Gulf War in 1991, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other states on the Arabian Peninsula began diverting to Hamas funds that had once gone to the P.L.O. In the early nineteen-nineties, according to Gilles Kepel, the author of "Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam," Hamas gained adherents from three social classes: impoverished young men, who took part in the armed resistance; the devout middle classes; and Islamist intellectuals in the region and in the West.

Israel and the United States, in the meantime, grew deeply frustrated with Arafat's inability, or unwillingness, to confront Hamas, which had become a pioneer in the art of terror. The first modern suicide bombing was carried out in 1981 against the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut; in 1983, Hezbollah, the Iranian-funded Shiite militia in southern Lebanon, used suicide bombers to attack American and French barracks in Beirut. In 1993, Hamas took it up with terrifying frequency.

After the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, in 1995, Hamas became perhaps the most important factor in the search for a successor: a series of bombings that it carried out in Israel during the campaign turned Israeli voters toward the right-wing Likud Party and brought Benjamin Netanyahu, who promised no concessions to the Palestinians, to power. Netanyahu declared himself determined to destroy Hamas, but he managed instead to return the favor, ordering an operation that helped its leadership immeasurably.

In 1997, Netanyahu dispatched a team of Mossad agents to Amman to assassinate Khaled Meshal, the chief Hamas leader abroad. Two agents approached Meshal on the street from behind and one pricked his ear with a needle loaded with a deadly nerve toxin. Meshal's bodyguard, however, turned out to be a spectacular athlete and ran down the Israeli agents, first by car and then on foot, beat them, and brought them to a local prison. Once the Israeli agents confessed to the poisoning on videotape, King Hussein, furious that the Mossad had carried out the mission on Jordanian territory long after he had made peace with Israel, called Netanyahu and demanded the antidote to the poison. Netanyahu refused. Only after Hussein appealed to Bill Clinton and the Israeli press began criticizing Netanyahu for ordering such a spectacularly stupid operation did he relent. Meshal survived. Hussein, who had his own Palestinian majority to placate, extracted another concession from Netanyahu: rather than lose the peace with Jordan, the Israeli Prime Minister agreed to release Sheikh Yassin from prison.

For several years, Yassin served as the strategic and spiritual guide for Hamas. Israel maintained that he gave the final assent to terrorist operations. In 2004, during the Al Aqsa intifada and the Israeli attempt to wipe out the Hamas leadership, Yassin was killed in a missile attack. Since then, when I have visited Hamas leaders in Gaza and the Muslim Brotherhood's headquarters in Cairo, I've seen portraits of

Yassin in every office. "He is our holy man," Mahmoud al-Zahar, the Hamas leader in Gaza, told me. "He is our greatest martyr."

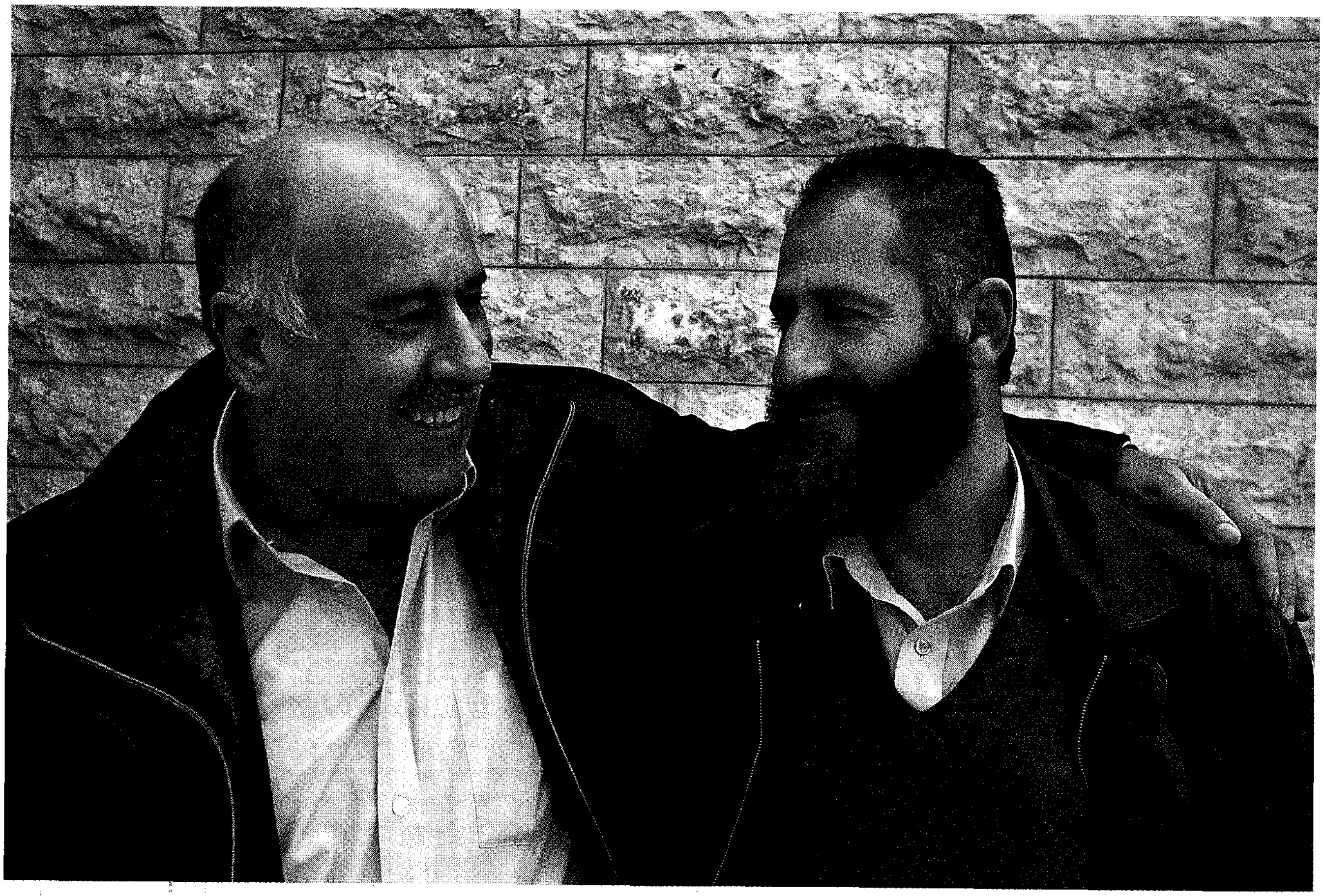
The principal Hamas leaders—Zahar and Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza, and Musa Abu-Marzuq and Khaled Mashel in Damascus—have never feigned innocence of the attacks committed in their name, but they are fairly schooled in the arts of diplomatic wrangling and media manipulation. Their public language attempts to yoke contradictory goals. Like the leaders of the I.R.A. decades ago, they are trying to enter the realm of politics without relinquishing the perquisites of armed resistance and the purity of ideological rejectionism. They want to maintain the support of their most radical fighters without losing the funding of the European Union. They hint at the possibility of a *hudna*—a prolonged truce—if Israel retreats to the borders that existed before the Six-Day War, but they also reserve the "historical" goal of absolute dominion made plain in their charter.

Sheikh Nayef Rajoub is more typical of the men and women of Hamas who will make up the majority of the next Palestinian legislature. Unlike the Fatah politicians, who have travelled the world, navigated diplomatic receptions, and dealt closely with the Israelis for many years, they are provincial, inexperienced, and leery of the task of governing even a proto-state. Few polls showed that Hamas would win the election, and its leaders were as surprised as Fatah or Israeli intelligence. But now Sheikh Nayef was prepared to be magnanimous toward his more famous older brother.

"In the past, my brother and I had reasons for tension," he said as we ate the last of the mutton. "These days, our relationship is better than ever. We are civilized people, and everyone has his choice, including religion. My choice is Islam and Jibril's choice is something else. I think Jibril did pray for a little while and then he stopped. It's sad for me."

The Sheikh felt that he was part of a "worldwide historical wave." He said that Hamas, after years of keeping its distance from official politics, had decided to "accept the democracy game," and he was sure that if the same opportunity were available elsewhere in the Arab world Islamist parties would prevail. "The failure of all other ideologies is sending Muslims toward Islam, and this is the case in Palestine," he said. "Twenty years ago when I was working in the mosque, around a hundred and fifty, two hundred people came on Friday. Now it's a few thousand. At that time, there was only one mosque in Dura. Now there are twelve." Hamas even won a considerable crossover vote, polling well in cities with sizable Christian populations, such as Ramallah and Bethlehem.

The Sheikh said he knew that, despite the heavy vote for Hamas, the majority of Palestinians tell pollsters that they favor an end to the occupation and a two-state solution. But Hamas, he added, would "never" bow to Israeli, American, European, and even Egyp-



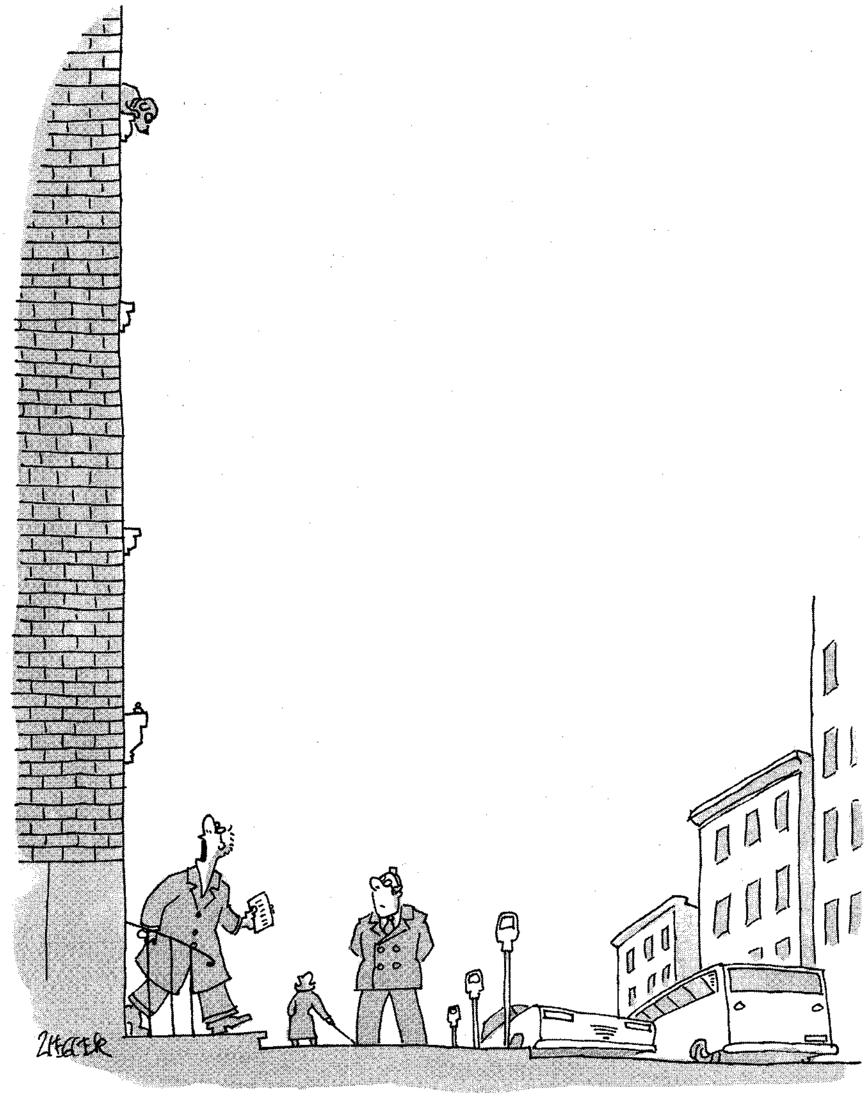
Jibril Rajoub (left), a Fatah leader, lost his campaign; his brother Sheikh Nayef, of Hamas, won the most votes in the West Bank.

tian demands that it acknowledge the existence of Israel and disarm.

"How can the world want us to recognize the state of Israel when Israel will not give us the right to exist, when it took our land and imposed occupation and does not recognize our rights?" he said. "Resistance for us is a legitimate action. Divine and human laws give us the right to resist."

Hamas has not executed any suicide bombings in the past few months, but the Israelis do not take the lull to reflect a nascent desire for compromise. "The conflict with Israel is not a matter of land," Sheikh Nayef said. "It's a matter of ideology. All the Israeli slogans—the 'chosen people,' the 'promised land'—the basis of their state is religious. But these are religious legends, false stories. God did not give them this land as if Israelis, Jews, are preferred above all other peoples on earth and all other peoples were meant to serve them." The Sheikh went on, "Two hundred years ago in Europe, they were conservative people, but now the fashion world, the media—it's controlled by the Jews. And their people are sexually open. Freud, a Jew, was the one who destroyed morals, and Marx destroyed divine ideologies. If it is not all Jews, well, they were a big part of this. And now it is the Jewish lobby in the United States that is setting policy in the world and causing the United States to wage war all over the world."

One of the biggest financial supporters of Hamas has been the fundamentalist Shiite regime in Tehran, according to Israeli and U.S. intelligence agencies. At a conference in Tehran last October called "A World Without Zionism," Iran's current President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, urged the Palestinians to maintain a maximalist position toward Israel. Quoting Ayatollah Khomeini's statement that Israel "must be eliminated from the pages of history," Ahmadinejad instructed the Palestinians never to bow to the demands of diplomacy. They must not recognize Israel—and anyone who does, he declared, "should know that he will burn in the fire of the *Ummah*," the Islamic nation.



"I know! I know! Biscuits! I'm on it!"

I asked the Sheikh if he agreed with Ahmadinejad's argument, much publicized in recent months, that the Holocaust was a myth, and a pretext for the creation of Israel.

The question, the Sheikh said, had direct bearing on his morning homily about the Danish cartoons and the will of the Muslims to resist humiliation: "When Ahmadinejad spoke, everyone in the West condemned him, but why didn't the West say that Ahmadinejad had his right of freedom of speech?" The Sheikh smiled like one who has scored an irrefutable point. "If the issue concerns Jews, it's always anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism, but when it concerns other religions it's a matter of freedom of speech."

But did he agree with the Iranian leader? I asked.

The Sheikh smiled again, this time indulgently.

"If I answer, you'll provide me with a real headache, won't you?" he said. "I don't want to tell you my opinion on this. No doubt, it's too controversial. If I say I agree with Ahmadinejad, Hamas will be added to the list of those who deny the Holocaust. If I don't agree with him, it will provide the Jews with the excuse that, since they suffered a lot in the Second World War, it justifies what they are doing now. What I do know about for sure is the crimes of the Jews in Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza."

Word came that the Sheikh's brother Jibril was going to visit. Through the window we could see a convoy led by an armored Land Cruiser and a BMW sedan—the rewards of Fatah power—pulling up in front of the house. The Sheikh sighed. He did not seem entirely ready to greet his big brother. To cheer him up I asked him what else he did besides preach and teach the Koran.

"I am also the head of the Hebron Beekeepers Union," he said.

I asked him if he got stung a lot.

The Sheikh rolled his eyes. "Don't ask," he said.

In the mid-nineteen-nineties, Jibril Rajoub, Marwan Barghouti, who led the Fatah militia, and Muhammad Dahlan, the head of security for the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip, were considered potential successors to "the Old Man"—Arafat. Unlike Jibril, his colleagues won seats in the new parliament, despite certain disadvantages: Barghouti is in jail serving five life sentences (plus forty years) for helping to kill four Israelis and a Greek monk; Dahlan is thought to have enriched himself and his extended family outrageously and illegally. Jibril, however, could not overcome the complexities of his history and his personality. During the campaign, his reputation suffered not only because of his arrogance—the swaggering demeanor, the wealth he has allegedly acquired—but also because he had lost touch with his potential voters. Since returning to the West Bank from the P.L.O.'s exile in Tunis, he has lived and worked almost entirely in Jericho and Ramallah.

Khalid Amayreh, a journalist in Dura who writes for the Al Jazeera Web site, told me, "Jibril is flamboyant, ostentatious, a self-inflated egomaniac with a sense of megalomania. His tongue often functions much more quickly than his mind. He is no intellectual. As they say, 'Manchester born, Manchester bred, / Strong in the arm, weak in the head.' In his speeches he attacked his opponents hysterically and frantically, calling them all kinds of names. He said, 'I was shooting Israelis when Sheikh Nayef was still playing with little kids.' And he mocked Hamas. It was all a public-relations disaster."

Mocking Hamas when Hamas has been able to build a reputation among Palestinians for grass-roots charity and incorruptibility was a dubious strategy for any Fatah candidate. In Palestinian eyes, Hamas had created a kind of shadow civil society long before it won a reputation for suicide bombings.

"Anytime you get tired of flagellating yourself, I'd be happy to take over."

• •

One morning, I visited the Islamic Charitable Society, in Hebron, a sprawling facility for several thousand children that includes schools, a medical clinic, and an orphanage. The director, a former marketing manager named Khalil Herbawi, said that the society was funded by various Western non-governmental organizations, by Arab groups, and by private donors. Herbawi's predecessor was in Hamas and had been arrested in 2002 for helping to finance and plan an attack on the nearby settlement of Adora. Herbawi said that he had voted for Hamas in the elections but added, "I am not in Hamas myself." Last September, Israeli troops took over the society's administrative building, confiscating documents, fax machines, printers, and computers and then sealing the doors as if it were a crime scene, an action that outraged Herbawi.

"The Israelis say that we take care of children whose parents martyred themselves," Herbawi said. "But we take all the orphans, the ones whose parents are suicide bombers or who died of cancer or heart attacks. . . . Of the thousand orphans here, only twenty or twenty-one are orphans because of suicide bombing. Another twenty or so are children of collaborators who were killed. So it evens out."

As we looked in on classrooms full of children learning math and science and then looked out from a balcony onto a playground filled with girls, all of them wearing the *hijab,* Herbawi said, "Is this terrorism? Maybe they will arrest me, too."

Such institutions understandably helped make Hamas popular. Gaza and the West Bank are poor, and although in the past decade Western and Arab governments have poured billions of dollars into the accounts of the Palestinian Authority, most Palestinians believe that, thanks to the corruption of Fatah, they have been systematically robbed of much of that aid money. Western intelligence agencies believe that Hamas has used its social institutions for armed operations, indoctrinating children in schools, inciting violence and recruiting cells in mosques, establishing safe houses, and providing funds for weapons and for the families of fighters who have blown themselves up for the cause.

In 1998, Sheikh Yassin said that the political and social branches of Hamas could not be distinguished from the military. "We cannot separate the wing from the body," he said, according to

"I love the little ways you're identical to everyone else."

• •

a report by Reuters. "If we do so, the body will not be able to fly. Hamas is one body."

In most Palestinian cities and towns, the elections were so consuming that for weeks campaign placards replaced the usual posters of young men and women hoisting AK-47 rifles in their last moments alive. Democracy obscured the cult of martyrdom. Fatah outspent Hamas and the smaller parties, and the Bush Administration funnelled nearly two million dollars through U.S.A.I.D. funding projects in the occupied territories that it hoped would help Fatah's election chances.

Hamas did manage to hire Nashat Aqtash, a professor of media studies at Bir Zeit University, to advise them on public relations. Aqtash told me when I visited him in Ramallah that his job was not as difficult as it seemed to outsiders. "For you, Hamas is suicide bombing and that's it," he said. "But suicide bombing is only a small fraction of what Hamas is for the Palestinian people." Hamas, he insisted, was "all pluses, no minuses." Its image of distributing charity and having borne the brunt of the Al Aqsa intifada and, by contrast, Fatah's almost surreal disorganization was just part of the story. The American contributions backfired. "The Palestinians are stubborn and don't want to be told what to do, least of all by the United States of America," he said.

Hamas ran three television commercials in the last week of the campaign, and none of them called on the familiar imagery of teen-age martyrs and declarations of jihad. Aqtash showed me the ads on his computer screen. One ad alternated images of Palestinian children suffering at the hands of Israeli soldiers and the words "Our blood"—in red—"is a fence to protect our holy places." Very soft-soap by Hamas standards. Another featured Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's lead candidate on the national slate, who is expected to be named Prime Minister. "We will protect the resistance movement until we gain back all the occupied territories," Haniyeh said, speaking almost in a whisper.

Aqtash had counselled Hamas candidates not to talk about killing Israelis and to limit their speeches about taking back all of historical Palestine. "You see," he said proudly, "it is clear that he means the territories occupied in 1967. Only crazy people talk about going beyond the 1967 borders."

If a Hamas-led government was going to attract funds from abroad for the Palestinians, I asked, what was its next public-relations strategy?

Aqtash smiled and reminded me that his contract had run out on Election Day; nevertheless, he offered some final words of advice. "Our rhetoric was ineffective because we used Islamic rhetoric that is understandable to us but incomprehensible, and scary, to you," he said. "At funerals, you would see masked people carrying rifles. In Gaza, this is a cultural thing, trying to show our grief and support to the families. But these images in the West mean 'We will kill you.' We need to organize the Palestinian message to the West and put it in a context that the West can understand. Israelis kill Palestinians, but they also have the talent to explain themselves."

Stout, smiling through a scowl, and sitting in his chair with one arm slung over his seatback like a sultan, Jibril Rajoub instantly became the focal point of his younger brother's living room. A boy appeared balancing a tray holding many glasses of tea. Jibril was served first. Sheikh Nayef began to work his worry beads at a fantastic clip while Jibril talked about devoting himself to the revival of Fatah and trying to coexist with Hamas as a matter of familial duty.

"Having a brother in Hamas is O.K., and I am proud of him," he said. "Sheikh Nayef is a moderate, he's realistic, a pragmatist. He was never an extremist. Politically, in the nineties, there were two different strategies. We in Fatah saw certain things as the rules of the game where negotiations were concerned. But in the past five years the Israelis stopped dealing with the Palestinian Authority as a partner, and the gap between the two Palestinian factions grew smaller. . . . We'll remain in the opposition as an honest partner, and we won't try to undermine Hamas's authority. We wish them success."

Jibril had imprisoned many Hamas activists in his time, but now he acted the part of the defeated opponent graciously offering advice to his successors. "Most people in Hamas are realistic," he said. "I don't think anything will take place on a social level—like forcing women to wear the *hijab*. Hamas has to focus on international legitimacy and assure the international community that an Islamic leadership will contribute to regional stability."

A couple of days later, I visited Jibril at his office in Ramallah. During the Al Aqsa intifada, the Israelis shelled the building, but now it was repaired and filled with aides gossiping about Jibril's future and the coming of Hamas. Jibril gave me a copy of his "autobiography"—a book-length series of interviews about his years in Israeli prisons, his ascension to Arafat's circle, and his contacts with Israeli and American intelligence. The book featured photographs of him as a young man in Israeli custody and also ones of him—older, heavier—with George Tenet, Nelson Mandela, and Israeli officials. Jibril knew that such relationships, a remnant of the Oslo years, were part of what killed his election chances.

"There are all kinds of stories about how close I was to the Americans, the C.I.A., and all the rest," Jibril said bitterly. "But how close? When I had cancer in 2002, after I left Preventive Security, I was treated first in Egypt, and they urged me to go to the Mayo Clinic, in Minnesota. But I was refused an American visa." He went to England instead. "I never once talked with the Israelis without a green light from Abu Amar," he went on, using Arafat's nom de guerre. "And after I met with the Israelis I always reported straight to him."

Jibril had been at Arafat's side, but it had always been a prickly relationship. In Tunis, according to Matt Rees's book "Cain's Field," Rajoub once refused Arafat's request to drive his future wife, Suha Tawil, to the airport on the ground that he would not "chauffeur a whore." In May, 2002, Arafat fired Jibril as the head of Preventive Security after the Israelis demanded that the various Palestinian security agencies be put under Rajoub's control. A month earlier, Israel had attacked Jibril's compound. Jibril and his men had been allowed to escape, but only after giving up the Islamist prisoners in their custody. In 2003, Arafat brought Jibril back into the Palestinian leadership, appointing him national-security adviser. "Our relationship had its ups and downs, which happens in any relationship that goes on for many years," Jibril said. "At a certain point, Arafat felt that I was a threat to his regime, but I was always loyal to him. He was always the symbol of the Palestinian people and contributed to the cause more than anyone else."

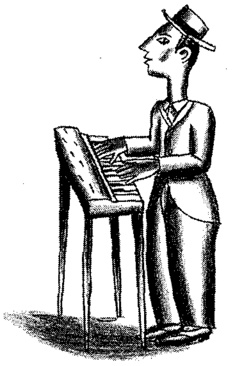
After Arafat died, in November, 2004, and his heir in Fatah, Mahmoud Abbas, won election as President of the Palestinian Authority, Hamas had an easier time portraying itself as the incorruptible champion of resistance and Fatah as a spent force. Among his doubters, Abbas is considered timid, indecisive, and incapable of extracting anything from the Israelis. Jibril fought with Arafat over many issues, but he said, "If Arafat were still alive, Hamas would never have won. Arafat's loss was a loss for everyone and in every way. He was the only Palestinian leader truly committed to the reconciliation of two peoples. He had the long view."

If Arafat had such a long view, I asked, why did he turn down a deal at Camp David in 2000 that, for all its deficiencies, would have been a far better arrangement than anything contemplated by the Israelis today? Sheikh Nayef had told me that Camp David would have been an "unacceptable betrayal." His brother did not answer directly, but it was clear that his opinion was not the same.

"Excuse me! Why ask this question?" he said. "The Israelis talk of unilateralism now. Camp David is long over. There's no use crying over spilled milk."

The Israelis have begun an election campaign of their own, to choose a successor to Ariel Sharon, who has been in a coma since early January, when he suffered a stroke. And even though they are well aware that Sharon's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza last year has been interpreted by Hamas as a credit to armed resistance, all polls show that the Kadima Party, led by Olmert, Sharon's deputy prime minister, will win. Olmert gave an interview to Israel's Channel 2 making it plain that, like Sharon, he planned to close dozens of smaller settlements on the West Bank but retain the main blocs of Ariel, Gush Etzion, and Ma'ale Adumim. He said that he would also retain "control" of the Jordan Valley and sovereignty over all of Jerusalem. This is less than what Ehud Barak and Bill Clinton proposed to Arafat five years ago, and it came as no surprise that the Hamas leadership dignified Olmert's offer only with mockery. In Cairo, Musa Abu-Marzuq, who once led the Hamas political bureau from northern Virginia, said, "When we restore historical Palestine, the Jews can come live with us. They will then acquire the Palestinian nationality."

In early February, while the Hamas leadership made plans for a new government, the security situation deteriorated. Gaza was turning into a lawless state, with Palestinian militias launching Qassam rockets into Israeli territory and the Israeli Army killing militants, mainly from the air. In Hebron, local Islamists assaulted the headquarters of a European observer team; a dozen Danes on the team had to be escorted out of Hebron by the Israeli Army—precisely the soldiers they had been sent to observe. The same week, the Israelis arrested a group of religious militants who "identify with Hamas" and charged them with killing six Jews in the past year.



In Israel, there was no sense that the rise of Hamas could be dismissed simply as a protest vote. Even a liberal scholar like Emmanuel Sivan, an expert in fundamentalism who has met Sheikh Yassin and other Hamas representatives over the years, told me, "If you are living in Israel it is always good to be anxious. We are a state living on edge." He did say, however, that "the typical American-Jewish oy-vey reaction" was not warranted.

"An Arab friend told me, 'Fatah is the crime and Hamas is the punishment,' " Sivan said. "Three-quarters of the Palestinians want a long-term arrangement with Israel and understand they have got only so far with violence, but they also want the rascals out.” The biggest danger facing Israel, he said, was that anarchy would begin to prevail, with uncontrolled militias and criminal gangs causing such a state of unrest that elements from Al Qaeda could exploit the situation and make their way to Gaza and the West Bank.

The Israeli security establishment is particularly worried about the relationship between Hamas and the Islamic regime in Tehran. “I am concerned about Iran’s efforts to engulf Israel with Islamist fundamentalist terror groups on the border: with Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, and with Hamas in Gaza and the West Bank,” Yuval Steinitz, the chairman of the Defense and Foreign Affairs committee in the Knesset, told me. “If Hamas takes control of the Palestinian armed forces and police, that means it will establish an armed threat right near Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ben-Gurion airport.” Avi Dichter, who recently stepped down as the head of Shin Bet, the Israeli F.B.I., and is now running for a seat in the Knesset, said that while the Israeli military had killed, arrested, or detained dozens of Hamas fighters and leaders during the Al Aqsa intifada, support from Iran, and the new ability to operate in Gaza with less Israeli interference, means that the militias remain a threat. In addition, Fatah’s own battalions, which adopted suicide bombing as a tactic in order to keep up with Hamas in the race for street credibility, have not disbanded, despite repeated statements from Abbas decrying violence.

For all the anxiety about Hamas, there remains in Israeli society a broad consensus for a two-state solution—a desire born less of an Oslo-era optimism about an integrated “new Middle East” and more of sheer weariness with occupation and an understanding that to retain the territories is to risk the Zionist idea of maintaining a Jewish majority in a democratic state.

“I don’t see any chance of reaching an agreement that you would call real peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians,” Shlomo Gazit, a retired, dovish Army general who used to command the West Bank and Gaza, told me. “This is not in the stars for the next hundred years. The Arab world does not accept a foreign people, a foreign religion, in the Middle East. All we can strive for is practical coexistence.”

“There is no resolution to this conflict,” Yehoshua Porath, a scholar of Middle Eastern history, says. “It is like a person living with a chronic disease for which there is no cure. You take palliatives and partial remedies. You know there is no final cure yet, but you keep investing in the search. Here the final cure is a peace settlement.”

THE SECRET LIFE OF NEW YORK

She decided to walk there.
Put the high heels in a backpack.
Walked down two flights, through
two doors, and up three steps to the street.
When she reached the National Wholesale
Liquidators, a black man
gave her a torn card numbered 110
and took the backpack.
She chose some biscuits that cost
twenty-nine cents and a box
of foaming bath granules
for a dollar-sixty-seven. Went upstairs
to see if there were any bras
without underwires. Found one.
It was not as plain as she wanted
but she tried it on over her undershirt.
It was too big. Paid for the two items
and started walking. Four Asian women
raced by to see an Asian man
in a silver convertible. One turned back,
saying he was not as good-looking
as she expected. On the other side
of Houston, two old women stood
next to card tables, each with
two cans of kidney beans. One had
a few boxes of macaroni and cheese
on sale. At the bookstore
she sat outside and changed
into a good jacket and the heels.
Then went into the party
at the back of the store.

—*Linda Gregg*

In Gaza and the West Bank, the politicians, academics, and activists who were shocked by the Hamas victory have also searched for ways to soften the blow. The most common argument is that Hamas did not win many more votes than Fatah; it took fifty-six per cent of the seats but with only forty-four per cent of the vote. Part of the reason for the landslide is that Fatah ran an inept campaign, often putting forward more than one candidate against a single Hamas candidate, and splitting the vote. Hamas was also the beneficiary of a collective protest against the Palestinian Authority’s inability to cope with Sharon and Olmert, and the indignity of occupation. But the idea that Hamas will modify its ideology because it is now faced with the prospect of making good on its promises, of creating jobs and collecting the garbage, of day-to-day governing, does not impress many Palestinian analysts. In Iran, after all, Ahmadinejad came to power not because of his insistence on building a nuclear weapon or his anti-Semitic rhetoric; he, too, won popularity largely on social issues.

Ghassan Khatib, the Palestinian Authority's minister of planning, told me that the Fatah hierarchy is worried that there is a direct relationship between poverty and radical fundamentalism, and if the situation in the territories worsens an even more radical Hamas will take hold.

"The Muslim Brotherhood believes that it is possible to reëstablish the Islamic regimes in the Islamic world and reach the point of a single Islamic superpower, as in the old days," Khatib said. "It wants to be a huge modern state and compete with the modern superpowers. But it's a fantasy. You cannot govern by Islam. Islamic ideology is not suitable for that. It has fixed ideas on economics and government that are inflexible and irrelevant for modern times.

"Hamas can moderate in the tactical sense, but not fundamentally. It will play tactics on the question of violence and in its political slogans. What it wants is the freedom to maneuver, to build people into 'real and proper Muslims,' to keep building its base. . . . This is very dangerous for the Palestinians, and they should think about ending this Hamas majority. The Israelis need to take the opportunity to negotiate with Abbas and the peace camp. There are three years until the next Presidential elections. This is the historical window of opportunity. If Hamas wins the Presidency, that will be the end of it."

For the moment, Abbas does have greater power than the legislature. But Hamas has every intention of continuing to play what its leaders call "the democracy game" and winning it outright. One night in Hebron, I dropped by the Hamas headquarters to see Aziz al-Dweik, who will be joining the legislature next month as speaker of parliament.

When he was a young man, Dweik studied in Jordan and then earned a doctorate in urban and regional planning at the University of Pennsylvania. The geography of his life has been varied: he spent eight years in Philadelphia, one year in southern Lebanon with his fellow-Islamists in forced exile, and four in an Israeli prison.

When Dweik returned to Hebron in 1988, he said, "I spoke my mind just as I did in the mosque at the University of Pennsylvania." The Israelis did not appreciate it, jailing him several times for incitement and for membership in Hamas, which had been outlawed by Israel.

I mentioned that the Jerusalem *Post* had published a Hamas poster from the Al Aqsa intifada period that yoked together portraits of Sheikh Yassin, Shamil Basayev, a Chechen rebel leader, and Osama bin Laden. If Hamas was going to present itself as a rational political group, I said, why was it linking itself to Al Qaeda?

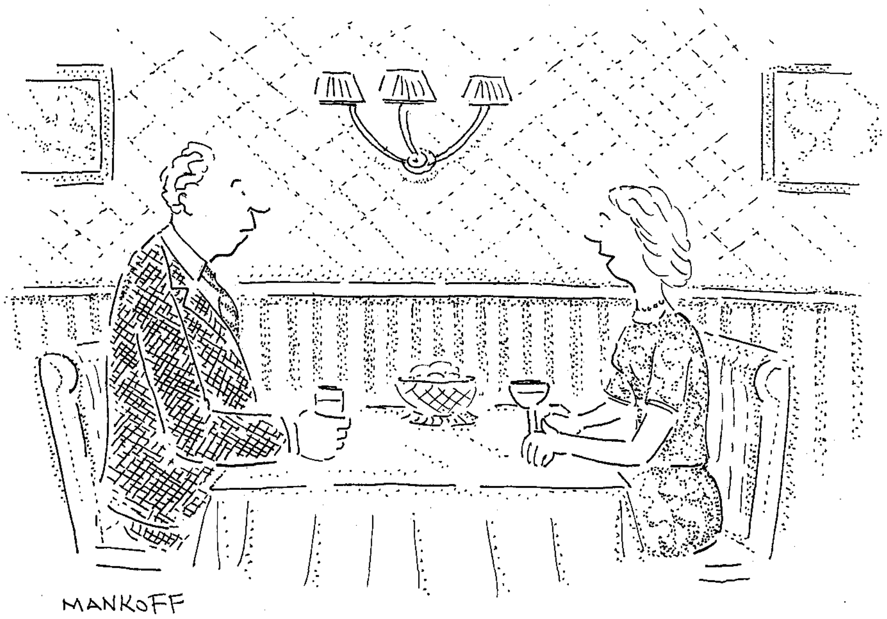
"Bin Laden is a fighter for the cause of Islam, and this man has his way of serving his God," Dweik said. "He has offered the West a truce many times, saying that he will put down his arms if the West stops interfering in our affairs. We have no right to hate bin Laden. We respect him. Hiding this fact does not serve the truth."

This was the most arresting aspect of the Hamas leaders; their thinking—their charter, their goals, short-range and long—was unconcealed and calmly provided. While diplomats and journalists sifted through the language looking for shades of meaning, Hamas was politely answering every question. Hamas is focussed primarily on the question of Palestine, of forming a government and resisting the Israeli occupation, but it also sees the election as part of a regional phenomenon, a historical tide, which, with time, not only would dislodge a few hundred settlers from Hebron but could cross borders into Egypt, Jordan, and beyond.

"Whenever and wherever people are given the choice, this is what happens," Dweik said. "Secularism is an import. It's not indigenous. Islam is a practical and idealistic way of life. Islam is the religion of God, which God has chosen for the guidance of mankind.

"Please stop asking us to recognize the occupier and not the needs of our own lives. This is slavery, slavery of a kind that did not even happen in Africa or in any other country! The Jews suffered the Holocaust, but it only happened for a short period of time. The Palestinians have been living a whole century in a holocaust. . . . The truth is on our side. The Israelis have the illusion that truth is on their side, but the Koran is the last revelation. The Israelis in this city have to move somewhere else. They have to acknowledge the facts on the ground. The future is ours.

"The situation with the Rajoub brothers, well, you may call it the ongoing conflict between secularism and Islam. The big brother is a secularist and the younger is an Islamist. But the Islamist won in a democratic vote. The two brothers gave you the shape of history—one has prevailed and the other will vanish." ♦

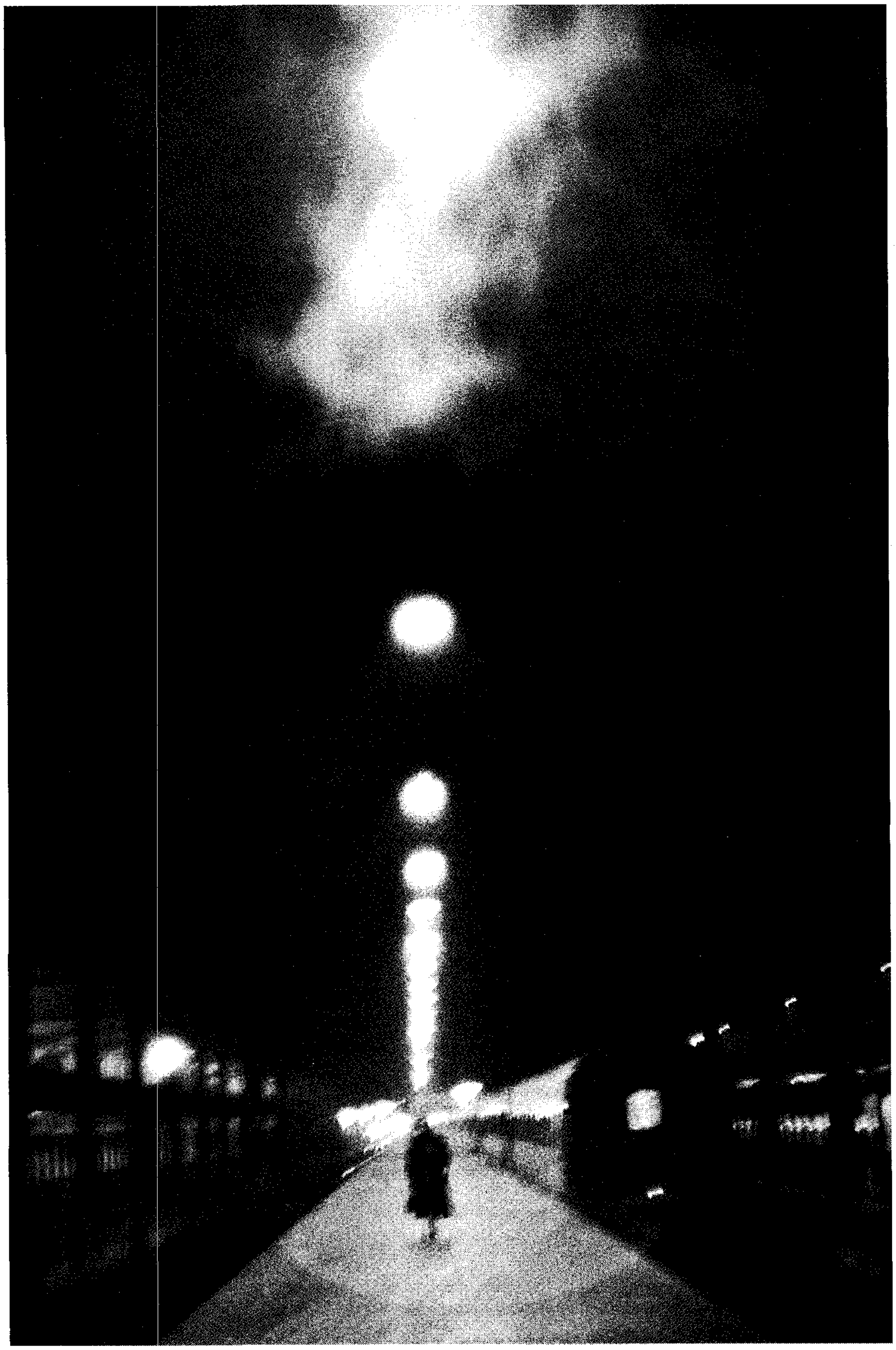


"You're a good husband, Dave—I just want to start marrying other people."

FICTION

MY FATHER'S TEARS

BY JOHN UPDIKE



Come to think of it, I saw my father cry only once. It was at the Alton train station, back when the trains still ran. I was on my way to Philadelphia to catch the train that would return me to Boston and college. I was eager to go, for already my home and my parents had become somewhat unreal to me, and college, with its courses and the hopes for my future they inspired and the girlfriend I had acquired in my sophomore year, had become more real every semester; it shocked me—threw me off track, as it were—to see that my father's eyes, as he shook my hand goodbye, glittered with tears.

I blamed it on our shaking hands: for eighteen years, we had never had occasion for this ritual, this manly contact, and we had groped our way into it only in the past few years. He was taller than I, though I was not short, and I realized, his hand warm in mine while he tried to smile, that he had a different perspective than I. I was going somewhere, and he was seeing me go. I was growing in my own sense of myself, and to him I was getting smaller. He had loved me, it came to me as never before. It was something that had not needed to be said before, and now his tears were saying it.

The old Alton station was his kind of place, savoring of transit and the furtive small pleasures of city life. I had bought my first pack of cigarettes here, with no protest from the man running the newsstand, though I was a young-looking fifteen. He simply gave me my change and a folder of matches advertising Sunshine beer, Alton's local brand. Alton was a middle-sized industrial city that had been depressed ever since the textile mills began to slide South. In the meantime, with its orderly street grid and hearty cuisine, it still supplied its citizens with traditional comforts and an illusion of well-being. I lit up a block from the station, as I remember, and even though I didn't know how to inhale, my nerves took a hit; the sidewalk seemed to lift toward me and the whole world felt lighter. From that day forward I began to catch up, socially, with the more glamorous of my peers, who already smoked.

Even my stay-at-home mother, no traveller but a reader, had a connection to the station: it was the only place in the city where you could buy *The American Mercury* and *The Atlantic Monthly*. Like the stately Carnegie library two blocks down Franklin Street, it was a place you felt safe inside. It had been built for eternity, when the railroads looked to be with us forever—a foursquare granite temple with marble floors, a high ceiling whose gilded coffers glinted through a coating of coal smoke, and tall-backed waiting benches as grave as church pews. The radiators clanked and the walls murmured as if giving back some of the human noise they absorbed, day and night. The newsstand and coffee shop were usually busy, and the waiting room was always warm, as my father and I had discovered on more than one winter night. We had been commuters to the same high school, he as a teacher and I as a student, in secondhand cars that on more than one occasion failed to start, or got stuck in a snowstorm. We would make our way to the station, one place sure to be open.

We did not foresee, that moment on the platform as the signal bells a half mile down the tracks warned of my train's approach, that within a decade passenger service to Philadelphia would stop, and that eventually the station, like stations all across the East, would be padlocked and boarded up. It stood on its empty acre of asphalt parking space like an oversized mausoleum. All the life it had once contained was sealed into silence, and for most of the rest of the century it ignominiously waited, in this city where progress was slow, to be razed.

But my father did foresee, the glitter in his eyes told me, that time consumes us—that the boy I had been was dying if not already dead, and we would have less and less to do with each other. I had taken my life from his, and now I was stealing away with it. The train appeared, the engine, with its shining long connecting rods and high steel wheels, out of all proportion to the little soft bodies it dragged along. I boarded it. My parents looked smaller, foreshortened. We waved sheepishly through the smirched glass. I opened my book—"The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton"—before Alton's gritty outskirts had fallen away.

At the end of that long day of travel, getting off not at Boston's South Station but at Back Bay, one stop earlier and closer to Cambridge, I was met by my girlfriend. How swanky that felt, to read Milton all day, the relatively colorless and hard-to-memorize pentameters of "Paradise Regained," and, in sight of the other undergraduates disembarking, to be met and embraced on the platform by a girl—no, a woman—wearing a gray cloth coat, canvas tennis sneakers, and a ponytail. It must have been spring break, because if Deb was greeting me the vacation had been too short for her to go back and forth to St. Louis, where her home was. Instead, she had been waiting a week for me to return. She tended to underdress in the long New England winter, while I wore the heavy winter coat, with buckled belt and fleecy lining, that my parents had bought me, to my embarrassment, to keep me from catching colds up in New England.

She told me, as we rode first the Green Line and then the Red back to Harvard Square, what had happened to her that week. There had been an unpredicted snow squall, whose sullied traces were still around us, and she was angry to the point of tears at having been given, because of her college education, in the restaurant where she was a part-time waitress, the assignment of adding up numbers in the basement while the other waitresses pocketed all the tips. I told her what I could recall of my week in Pennsylvania, already faded in memory except for the detail lodged there like a glittering splinter—my father's tears. My own eyes itched and burned after a day of reading in a jiggling train; I lifted them only to admire the shining water as the train travelled the stretch of track around New London.

In the years when we were newly married and still childless, Deb and I would spend a summer month with each set of parents. Her father was an eminent Unitarian minister, who preached in a gray neo-Gothic edifice built for eternity near the Washington University campus. Each June he moved his family from the roomy brick parsonage on Lindell Boulevard to an abandoned Vermont farmhouse he had bought in the nineteen-thirties for less than five hundred dollars. Some Junes, Deb and I arrived before her father's parish duties permitted him and the rest of his family, a wife and two other daughters, to be there. The chilly soli-

LOUIS STETTNER, "TRAIN PLATFORM" (1958)/BONNI BENRUBI GALLERY

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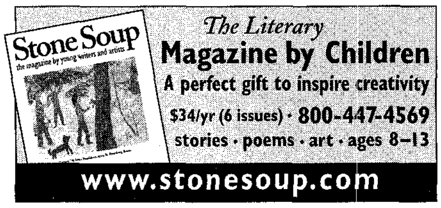
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tude of the place, with basic cold-water plumbing but no electricity, high on a curving dirt road whose only visible house, a half mile away, was occupied by another Unitarian minister, reinforced my sense of having moved up, thanks to my blue-eyed bride, into a new, more elevated and spacious territory.

The lone bathroom was a long room, its plaster walls and wooden floor both bare, that was haunted by a small but intense rainbow, which moved around the walls as the sun in the course of the day glinted at a changing angle off the bevelled edge of the mirror on the medicine cabinet. When we troubled to heat up enough water on the kerosene stove for a daylight bath, the prismatically generated rainbow kept the bather company; it quivered and bobbed when footsteps or a breath of wind made the house tremble. To me this Ariel-like phenomenon was the magical child of Unitarian austerity, symbolic of the lofty attitude that sought out a primitive farmhouse as a relief from well-furnished urban comfort. It had to do, I knew, drawing upon my freshly installed education, with idealism, with Emerson and Thoreau, with self-reliance and taking Nature on Nature's terms. A large side room in the house, well beyond the kerosene stove's narrow sphere of warmth, held a big loom frame that had come with the house, and an obsolete encyclopedia, and a set, with faded spines, of aged but rarely touched books entitled "The Master Works of World Philosophy." When I broke precedent by taking one of the volumes down, its finely ridged cloth cover gave my fingers an unpleasant tingle. It was the volume containing selections from Emerson's essays. "Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact," I read, and "Everything is made of one hidden stuff," and "Every hero becomes a bore at last," and "We boil at different degrees."

Deb used this large room, and the vine-shaded stone porch outside, to paint her careful oils and pale watercolors. When the day was sunny, and heating the tub water on the kerosene stove seemed too much trouble, we bathed in the mountain creek an easy walk from the house, in a pond whose dam her father had designed and built. I wanted to take her nude photograph with my Brownie Hawkeye, but she primly declined. One day I sneaked a few snapshots anyway, from the old bridge, while she, with exclamations that drowned out the noise of the shutter, waded in and took the plunge.

It was in Vermont, before the others arrived, that, by our retrospective calculations, we conceived our first child, unintentionally but with no regrets. This microscopic event deep within my bride became allied in my mind with the little rainbow low on the bathroom wall, our pet imp of refraction.

Her father, when he arrived, was a father I wasn't used to. Mine, though he had sufficient survival skills, enacted the role of an underdog, a man whose every day, at school or elsewhere, proceeded through a series of scrapes and embarrassments. The car wouldn't start, the students wouldn't behave. He needed people, the rub of them, for stimulation. Reverend Whitworth liked Vermont because, compared with St. Louis, it had no people in it. He didn't leave his hill for weeks at a time, letting the rest of us drive the two miles of dirt road to the nearest settlement, where the grocery store, the hardware store, and the post office all occupied one building, with one proprietor, who also managed the local sawmill. We would come back with local gossip and a day-old newspaper, and my father-in-law would listen to our excited tales of the greater world with a tilted head and a slant smile that let us guess he wasn't hearing a word. He had things to do: he built stone walls, and refined the engineering of his dam, and took a daily nap, during which the rest of us were to be silent.

He was a handsome man, with a head of tightly wiry hair whose graying did not diminish its density, but he was frail inside from rheumatic fever in his Maine boyhood. Rural peace, the silence of woods, the sway and flicker of kerosene light as drafts blew on the flaming wick and lamps were carried from room to room—these were his elements, not city bustle. During these hilltop vacation months, he moved among us—his wife, his three daughters, his son-in-law, his wife's spinster sister—like a planet exempt from the law of gravitational attraction.

His interactions came mostly with

games, which he methodically tended to win—family croquet in the afternoons, family Hearts in the evening, in the merged auras of the kerosene stove and the mantle lamp on the table. This was a special lamp, which intensified and whitened the glow of a flame with a mantle, a kind of conical net of ash so delicate it could be broken by even a carelessly rough setting-down of the glass base on the table. Reverend Whitworth was ostentatiously careful in everything his hands did, and I resented this, with the implacable *ressentiment* of youth. I resented his fussy pipe-smoker's gestures as he tamped and lighted and puffed; I resented his strictly observed naps, his sterling blue eyes (which Deb had inherited), his untroubled Unitarianism. Somehow, in my vicinity of Pennsylvania blue eyes were so rare as to be freakish—hazel was as far as irises ventured from the basic brown the immigrants from Wales and southern Germany had brought to the Schuylkill Valley.

"If someone is worth suing, he's worth suing well."

As for Unitarianism, it seemed so milky, so smugly vague and evasive: an unimpeachably featureless dilution of the Christian religion as I had met it in its Lutheran form—the whole implausible, colorful, comforting tapestry of the Incarnation and the Magi, Christmas carols and Santa Claus, Adam and Eve, nakedness and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the serpent and the Fall, betrayal in the garden and Redemption on the Cross, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" and Pilate washing his hands and Resurrection on the third day, posthumous suppers in an upper room and doubting Thomas and angels haunting the shadier margins of Jerusalem, the instructions to the disciples and Paul's being knocked from his donkey on the road to Damascus and the disciples talking in tongues (a practice at which the stolid churchgoers of Alton and its environs did draw the line). Our public-school day began with a Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer; our teachers and bankers and undertakers and mailmen all professed to be conventional Christians, and what was good enough for them should have been, I think I thought, good enough for Unitarians. I had read enough Kierkegaard and Barth and Unamuno to know about the leap of faith, and Reverend Whitworth was not making that leap; he was taking naps and building stone walls instead. In his bedroom I spotted a paperback Tillich, "The Courage to Be," probably, but I never caught him reading it, or "The Master Works of World Philosophy," either. The only time I felt him as a holy man was when, speaking with deliberate tenderness to one of his three daughters, he slipped into a "thee" or "thou" from his Quaker boyhood.

He was to be brought low, all dignity shed, before he died. Alzheimer's didn't so much invade his brain as deepen the benign fuzziness and preoccupation that had always been there. At the memorial service for his wife, dead of cancer, he turned to me before the service began and said, with a kindly though puzzled smile, "Well, James, I don't quite know what's up, but I guess it will all come clear." He didn't realize that his wife of forty-five years was being memorialized.

With her gone, he deteriorated rapidly. At the nursing home where we finally took him, he began to whimper at the admission desk, and jiggle up and down as if bouncing something in his pants, and I knew he needed to urinate, but I lacked the manliness to lead him quickly to the lavatory and take his penis out of his fly for him, so he wet himself and the floor. I was, in those years just before my divorce from Deb, the eldest son-in-law, the first mate, as it were, of the extended family, and I was failing in my role, though still taking a certain pride in it. My father-in-law had always, curiously, from those first summers in Vermont, trusted me—trusted me first with his daughter's well-being, and then with helping him lift the stones into place on his wall, where I could have pinched one of his fingers or dropped a rock on his toes.

I loved him, in fact. As innocent of harm as my own father, he made fewer demands on those around him. A little silence during his nap does not seem, now, too much to ask, though at the time it irritated me. His theology, or lack of it, seems one of the spacious views I enjoyed thanks to him. His was a cosmos from which the mists of superstition had almost cleared. His parish, there in the Gateway to the West, included university existentialists, and some of their hip philosophy buffed up his old-fashioned transcendentalist sermons, which he delivered in a beautiful voice, tentatively. Though Unitarian, he was of the theist branch, Deb would tell me in bed, hoping to mediate between us. I wasn't, as I remember it, graceless enough to quarrel with him often, but he could not have been ignorant of my Harvard neo-orthodoxy, with its Eliotic undercurrent of panic.

In Vermont, my household task was to burn the day's wastepaper, in a barrel up the slope behind the house, toward the spring that supplied our cold water. One could look across twenty miles of wooded valley to the next ridge of the Green Mountains. With Reverend Whitworth's blessing, I had been admitted to a world of long views and icy swims and New England reticence. He was a transparently good man who took himself with a little Maine salt. It is easy to love people in memory; the hard trick is to love them when they are there, in front of you.

Pennsylvania had its different tensions for Deb and me. We had gotten off to a bad start. The first time I brought her home to meet my parents, we disembarked at the wrong train station. The train from Philadelphia was a local. One of its stops was a hilly factory town seven miles from Alton, also along the Schuylkill and closer by a few miles to the country farmhouse to which we had moved, at my mother's instigation, after the war. We were among a handful of passengers to get off the train, and the platform in its tunnel of trees soon emptied. No one had come to meet us. My parents, in spite of arrangements clear in my own mind—I was trying to save them mileage—had gone to Alton.

Now I wonder how, in that era before cell phones, we managed to make contact. But in that same era even little railroad stations still were manned; perhaps the stationmaster telegraphed word of our plight to Alton and had my parents paged in the echoing great station. Or perhaps, by the mental telegraphy that used to operate in backward regions, they guessed the truth when we didn't disembark and simply drove to where we were. I was a young swain, and Deb, so securely in her element in St. Louis or Cambridge, seemed lost in my home territory. I kept failing to protect her from our primitive ways. Blamelessly, she kept doing things wrong.

Though we were not yet married, she had put some dirty socks and underwear of mine through her own laundry, and packed them, clean, in her suitcase. When my mother, helpfully hovering in the guest bedroom, noticed this transposition, she let loose one of her silent bursts of anger, a merciless succession of waves that dyed an angry red V on her forehead, between the eyebrows, and filled the little sandstone house to its corners, upstairs and down. The house of my childhood, in the town of Olinger, a mere trolley-car ride from Alton, had been a long narrow brick one, with a long back yard, so there were places to escape to when my mother was, in my father's bemused phrase, "throwing an atmosphere." But in the new house we could all hear one another turn over in bed at night, and even the out-of-doors, buzzing with insects and seething with weeds, offered no escape from my mother's psychological heat. I had grown up with her aggrieved moods, turned on usually by adult conflicts out of my sight and hearing. She could maintain one for days until, coming home from school or a friend's house, I would find it miraculously lifted. Her temper was part of my growing up, like Pennsylvania mugginess and the hot spells that could kill old people in their stifling row houses and expand the steel tracks on the street enough to derail trolley cars.

Whispering, I tried to apologize for this climate to Deb, while my mother's sulk, which had frozen all our tongues during dinner, continued to emanate from her bedroom down into the living room. The click of her latch had reverberated above us like a thunderclap. "You didn't do anything wrong," I assured Deb, though in my heart I felt that offending my mother was wrong, a primal wrong. I blamed Deb for mixing up my underwear with hers; she should have anticipated the issue, the implications. "It's the way she is."

"Well, she should wake up and get over it" was Deb's response, so loud I feared it could be heard upstairs. Amazed, I realized that she wasn't tuned as finely as I to the waves of my mother's anger.

Near the sofa where we sat, my father, dolefully correcting math papers in the rocking chair, said, "Mildred doesn't mean anything by it. It's her femininity acting up."

Femininity explained and justified everything for his sexist generation, but not for mine. I was mortified by this tension. That same visit, perhaps, or later, Deb, thinking she was doing a good deed, began on Sunday morning to weed the patch of pansies my mother had planted near the back porch and then neglected. Deb stood uncomprehending, her feet sweetly bare in the soft

"I got into the stupidest thing with my reflection this morning."

soil, like Ingrid Bergman's in "Stromboli," when I explained that around here nobody worked on Sundays; they went to church. "How silly," Deb said. "My father all summer does his walls and things on Sundays."

"He's a different denomination."

"Jim, I can't believe this. I really can't."

"Sh-h-h. She's inside, banging dishes around."

"Well, let her. They're her dishes."

"And we have to get ready for church."

"I didn't bring church clothes."

"Just put on shoes and the dress you wore down on the train."

"Shit I will. I'd look ridiculous. I'd rather stay here and weed. Your grandparents will be staying, won't they?"

"My grandmother. My grandfather goes. He reads the Bible every day on the sofa, haven't you noticed?"

"I didn't know there were places like this left in America."

"Well—" My answer was going to be lame, she saw, so she interrupted, with those sterling blue eyes. "I see now where you get your nonsense from, being so rude to Daddy."

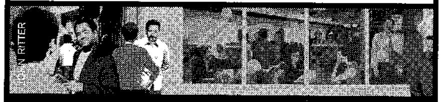
I was scandalized but thrilled, perceiving that a defense against my mother was possible. In the event, Deb stayed with my grandmother, who was disabled and speechless with Parkinson's disease. My rudeness to Reverend Whitworth was revenged when, baptizing our first child, his first grandchild, in a thoroughly negotiated Unitarian family service in the house of her Lutheran grandparents, he made a little joke about the "holy water"—water fetched from our own spring, which was down below the house instead of, as in Vermont, up above it. My mother sulked for the rest of the day about that, and always spoke of Catherine, our first child, as "the baby who didn't get baptized." By the time the three other babies arrived, Deb and I had moved to Massachusetts, where we had met and courted, and joined the Congregational Church as a reasonable compromise.

We are surrounded by holy water; all water, our chemical mother, is holy. Flying from Boston to New York, my habit is to take a seat on the right-hand side of the plane, but the other day I sat on the left, and was rewarded, at that hour of midmorning, by the sun's reflections on the waters of Connecticut—not just the rivers and the Sound but little ponds and pools and glittering threads of water that for a few seconds hurled silver light skyward into my eyes. My father's tears for a moment had caught the light; that is how I saw them. When he was dead, Deb and I divorced. Why? It's hard to say. We boil at different degrees, Emerson said, and a woman came along who had my boiling point. The snapshots I took of Deb naked, interestingly, she claimed as part of her just settlement. It seemed to me they were mine—I'd taken them. But she said her body was hers.

After our divorce, my mother told me, of my father, "He worried about you two from the first time you brought her home. He didn't think she was feminine enough for you."

"He was big on femininity," I said, not knowing whether to believe her or not. The dead are so easy to misquote.

My reflex is always to come to Deb's defense, even though it was I who wanted the divorce. It shocks me, at my high-school class reunions, when my classmates bother to tell me how much they prefer my second wife. It is true, Sylvia really mixes it up with them, in a way that Deb shyly didn't. But then Deb assumed that they were part of my past, something I had put behind me but reunited with every five years or so, whereas Sylvia, knowing me in my old age, recognizes that I have never really left Pennsylvania, that it is where the self I value is stored, however infrequently I check on its condition. The most recent reunion, the fifty-fifth, might have depressed Deb—all these people in their early seventies, most of them still living in the county within a short drive of where they had been born, even in the same semi-detached house where they had been raised. Some came in wheelchairs, and some were too sick to drive and were chauffeured to the reunion by their middle-aged children. The list of our deceased classmates on the back of the program grows longer; the class beauties are gone to fat or bony cronehood; the sports stars and non-athletic alike move about with the aid of pacemakers and plastic knees, retired and



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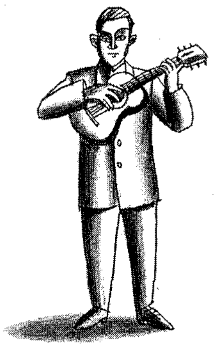
taking up space at an age when most of our fathers were considerately dead.

But we don’t see ourselves that way, as lame and old. We see kindergarten children—the same round fresh faces, the same cup ears and long-lashed eyes. We hear the gleeful shrieking during elementary-school recess and the seductive saxophones and muted trumpets of the home-bred swing bands that serenaded the blue-lit gymnasium during high-school dances. We see in each other the enduring simplicities of a town rendered changeless by Depression and then by a world war whose bombs never reached us, though rationing and toy tanks and air-raid drills did. Old rivalries are rekindled and put aside; old romances flare for a moment and subside into the general warmth, the diffuse love. When the class secretary, dear Ann Mahlon, her luxuriant head of chestnut curls now whiter than bleached laundry, takes the microphone and runs us through a quiz on the old days—teachers’ nicknames, the names of vanished luncheonettes and ice-cream parlors, the titles of our junior and senior plays, the winner of the scrap drive in third grade—the answers are shouted out on all sides. Not one piece of trivia stumps us: we were there, together, then, and the spouses, Sylvia among them, good-naturedly applaud so much long-hoarded treasure of useless knowing.



These were not just my classmates; they had been my father’s students, and his memory kept coming up. He was several times the correct answer—“Mr. Werley!”—in Ann Mahlon’s quiz. Cookie Behn, who had been deposited in our class by his failing grades and who, a year older than we, already had Alzheimer’s, kept coming up to me in the circulation after dinner, squinting as if at a strong light and huskily, ardently asking me, “Your father, Jimbo—is he still with us?” He had forgotten the facts but remembered that saying “still alive,” like the word “dead,” was somehow tactless.

“No, Cookie,” I said each time. “He died in 1972, of his second heart attack.” Oddly, it did not feel absurd to be calling a seventy-four-year-old man on a pronged cane Cookie.

He nodded, his expression grave as well as mildly puzzled. “I’m sorry to hear that,” he said.

I said, “I’m sorry to tell you,” though my father would have been over a hundred and running up big bills in a nursing home.

“And your mother, Jim?” Cookie persisted.

“She outlived him by seventeen years,” I told him, curtly, as if I resented the fact. “She was a happy widow.”

“She was a very dignified lady,” he said slowly, nodding as if to agree with himself. It touched me that he was attempting to remember my mother, and that what he said was, after all, true enough of her in her relations with the outside world. She had been outwardly dignified and, in her youth, beautiful or, as she once put it to me during her increasingly frank long widowhood, “not quite beautiful.”

My father had died when Deb and I were in Italy. We had gone there, with another couple in trouble, to see if we couldn’t make the marriage “work.” Our hotel in Florence was a small one with a peek at the Arno; returning from a trip to Fiesole—its little Roman stadium, its little museum—we had impulsively decided, the four of us, to have an afternoon drink in the hotel’s upstairs café, rather than return to the confinement of our rooms. The place was empty except for some Germans drinking beer in a corner, and some Italians standing up with espressos at the bar. If I heard the telephone ring at all, I assumed it had nothing to do with me. But the bartender came from behind the bar and walked over to me and said, “Signor Wer-lei? Telephone for you.” Who could know I was here?

It was my mother, sounding very small and scratchy. “Jimmy? Were you having fun? I’m sorry to disturb you.”

“I’m impressed you could find me.”

“The operators helped,” she explained.

“What’s happened, Mother?”

“Your father’s in the hospital. With his second heart attack.”

“How bad is it?”

“Well, he sat up in the car as I drove him into Alton.”

“Well, then, it isn’t too bad.”

There was a delay in her responses that I blamed on the transatlantic cable. She said at last, “I wouldn’t be too sure of that.” Except when we talked on the telephone, I never noticed what a distinct Pennsylvania accent my mother had. When we were face to face, her voice sounded as transparent as my own. “He woke up with this pressing feeling on his chest, and usually he ignores it. He didn’t today. It’s noon here now.”

“So you want me to come back,” I accused her. I knew my father wouldn’t want me inconvenienced. We had reservations for the Uffizi tomorrow.

She sighed; the cable under the ocean crackled. “Jimmy, I think you better. You and Deb, of course, unless she’d rather stay there and enjoy the art. Dr. Shirk doesn’t like what he’s hearing, and you know how hard to impress he usually is.”

This was before open-heart surgery and angioplasty; there was little for doctors to do then but listen with a stethoscope and prescribe nitroglycerin. The concierge looked up the next train to Rome, the other couple saw us to the Florence station—just beyond the Medici chapels, which we had always wanted to see, and were destined never to see together. In Rome, the taxi-driver found an airline office that was open. I will never forget the courtesy and patience with which that young airline clerk, in his schoolbook English, took our tickets to Boston the next week and converted them into tickets to Philadelphia the next day. More planes flew then. We made an evening flight to London, and had to lay over for the night. On the side of Heathrow away from London there turned out to be a world of new, tall hotels for passengers in transit. We got into our room around midnight. I called my mother—it was suppertime in Pennsylvania—and learned that my father was dead. To my mother, it was news a number of hours old, and she described in weary retrospect her afternoon of sitting in the Alton hospital and receiving increasingly dire reports. She said, “Doc Shirk said he fought real hard at the end. It was ugly.”

I hung up, and shared the news with Deb. She put her arms around me in the bed and told me, “Cry.” Though I saw the opportunity, and the rightness of it, I don’t believe I did. My father’s tears had used up mine. ♦

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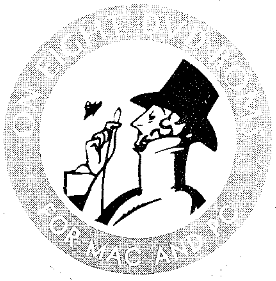

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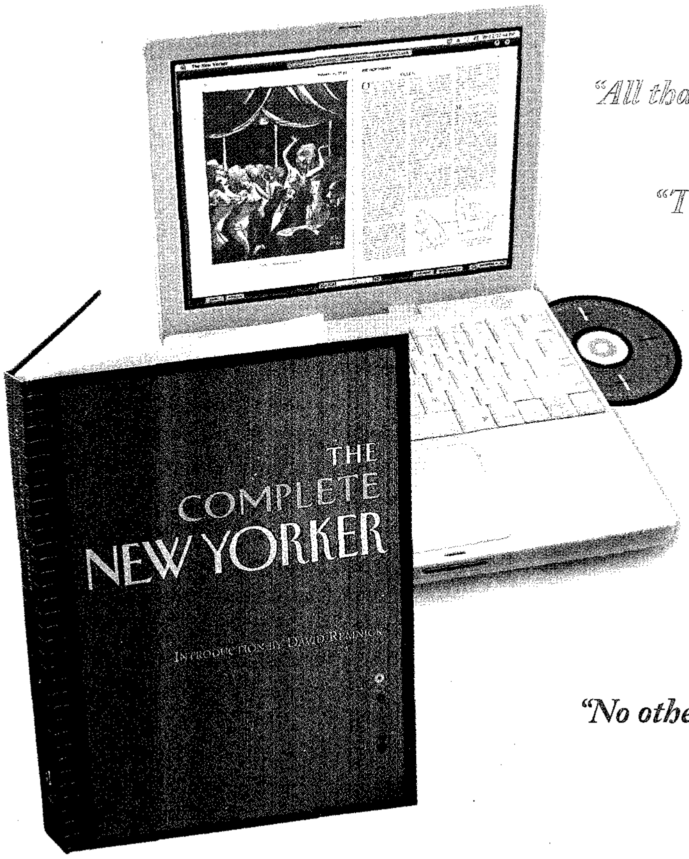

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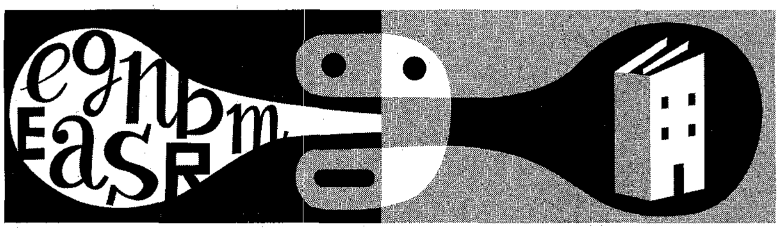

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PURSUING HAPPINESS

Two scholars explore the fragility of contentment.

BY JOHN LANCHESTER

It is the year 100,000 B.C., and two hunter-gatherers are out hunter-gathering. Let's call them Ig and Og. Ig comes across a new kind of bush, with bright-red berries. He is hungry, as most hunter-gatherers are most of the time, and the berries look pretty, so he pops a handful in his mouth. Og merely puts some berries in his goatskin bag. A little later, they come to a cave. It looks spooky and Og doesn't want to go in, but Ig pushes on ahead and has a look around. There's nothing there except a few bones. On the way home, an unfamiliar rustling in the undergrowth puts Og in a panic, and he freezes, but Ig figures that whatever is rustling probably isn't any bigger and uglier than he is, so he blunders on, and whatever was doing the rustling scuttles off into the undergrowth. The next morning, Og finally tries the berries, and they do indeed taste O.K. He decides to go back and collect some more.

Now, Ig is clearly a lot more fun than Og. But Og is much more likely to pass on his genes to the next generation of hunter-gatherers. The downside to Ig's fearlessness is the risk of sudden death. One day, the berries will be poisonous, the bear that lives in the cave will be at home, and the rustling will be a snake or a tiger or some other vertebrate whose bite can turn septic. Ig needs only to make one mistake. From the Darwinian point of view, Og is the man to bet on. He is cautious and prone to anxiety, and these are highly adaptive traits when it comes to survival.

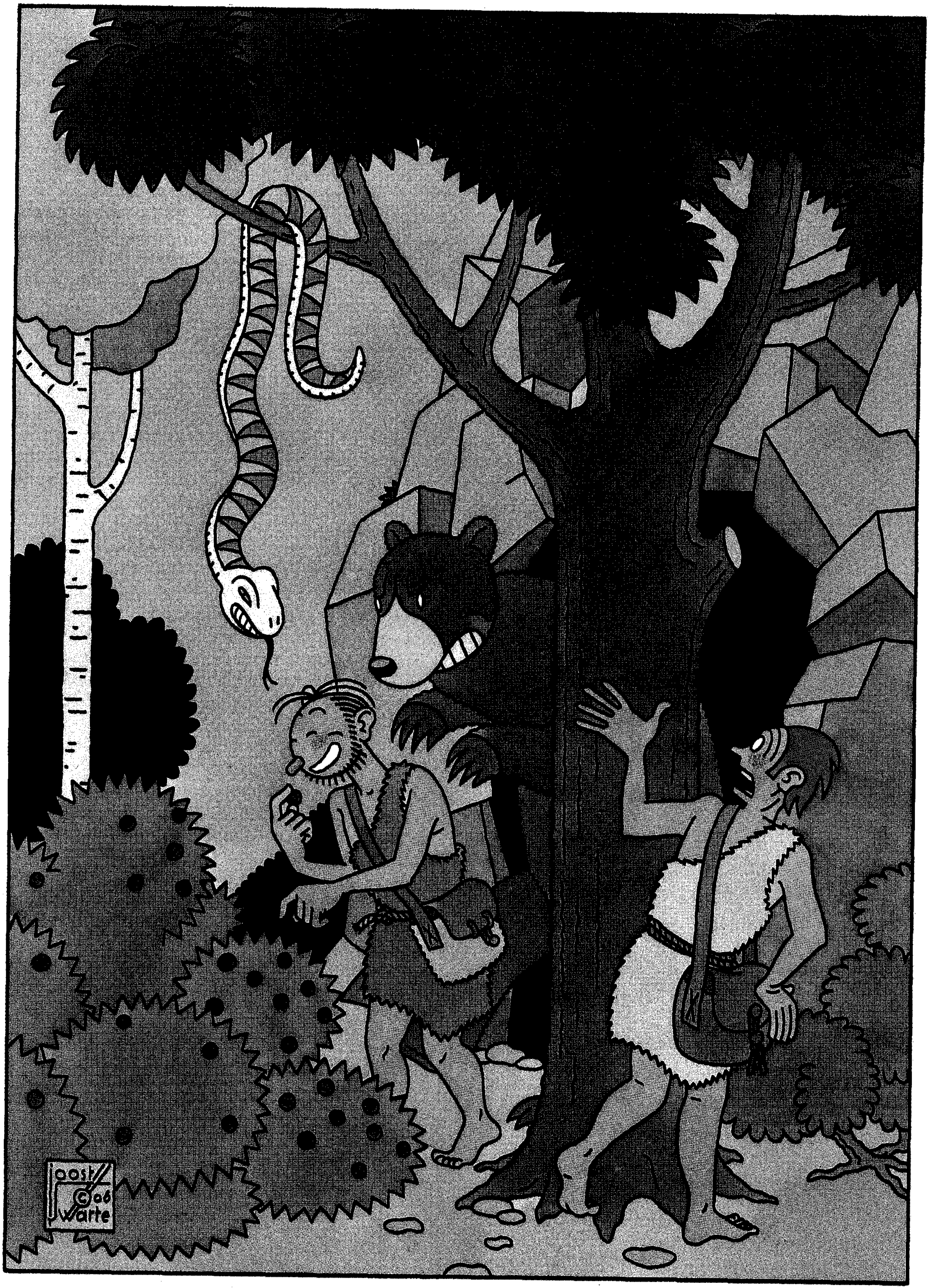
We are the children of Og. For most of the time that anatomically modern humans have existed—a highly contested figure, but let's call it a million years—it has made good adaptive sense to be fearful, cautious, timid. As Jonathan Haidt, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, puts it in "The Happiness Hypothesis" (Basic; $26), "bad is stronger than good" is an important principle of design by evolution. "Responses to threats and unpleasantness are faster, stronger, and harder to inhibit than responses to opportunities and pleasures." This is a matter of how our brains are wired: most sense data pass through the amygdala, which helps control our fight-or-flight response, before being processed by other parts of our cerebral cortex. The feeling that a fright can make us "jump half out of our skin" is based on this physical reality—we're reacting long before we know what it is that we're reacting to.

This is one of the reasons that human beings make heavy weather of being happy. We have been hardwired to emphasize the negative, and, for most of human history, there has been a lot of the negative to emphasize. Hobbes's description of life in the state of nature as "nasty, brutish and short" is so familiar we can forget that, for most of the people who have ever lived, it was objectively true. Most humans have had little control over their fate; a sniffle, a graze, or a bad piece of meat, let alone a major emergency such as having a baby—all were, for most of our ancestors, potentially lethal. One of the first people to be given penicillin was an Oxford policeman named Albert Alexander, who, in 1940, had scratched himself on a rose thorn and developed septicemia. After he was given the experimental drug, he began to recover, but the supply ran out after five days, and he relapsed and died. That was the world before modern medicine, and it would have been familiar to Ig and Og in a crucial respect: one false move and you were dead.

We can't be sure, but it seems unlikely that our prehistoric forebears spent much time thinking about whether or not they were happy. As Darrin McMahon, a historian at Florida State University, argues in his heavyweight study of the subject, "Happiness: A History" (Atlantic Monthly Press; $27.50), the idea of happiness is not a human universal that applies across all times and all cultures but a concept that has demonstrably changed over the years. When your attention is fully concentrated on questions of survival, you don't have the time or the inclination even to formulate the idea of happiness. You have to begin to feel that you have some control over your circumstances before you begin to ask yourself questions about your own state of mind.

People who have scant control over their lives are bound to place tremendous importance on luck and fate. As McMahon points out, "In virtually every Indo-European language, the modern word for happiness is cognate with luck, fortune or fate." In a sense, the oldest and most deeply rooted philosophical idea in the world and in our natures is "Shit happens." *Happ* was the Middle English word for "chance, fortune, what *happens* in the world," McMahon writes, "giving us such words as 'happenstance,' 'haphazard,' 'hapless,' and 'perhaps.' " This view of happiness is essentially tragic: it sees life as consisting of the things that happen to you; if more good things than bad happen, you are happy.

"Call no man happy until he is dead" was the Greek way of saying this. It was only when someone had passed beyond the vicissitudes of chance, and reposed honorably in the grave, that one could finally render the verdict. The original challenge to this idea came from classical Athens, the first place where men were free and self-governing, and, not coincidentally, a culture in which a great emphasis was placed on ideas of self-reliance and self-control. Socrates seems to have been the earliest person to think critically about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For most of human history, it made good adaptive sense to be fearful and emphasize the negative; any mistake could be fatal.

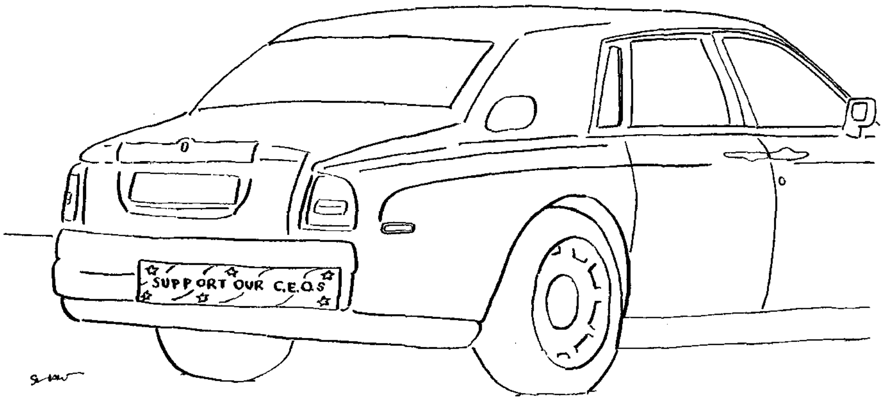
the conditions of happiness, and how one could be happy, and in doing so he caused a shift in the way people thought about the subject. Socrates made the question of happiness one of full accord between an individual and the good: to be happy was to lead a good life, one in keeping with higher patterns of being.

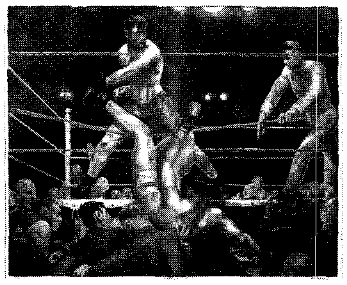
That basic idea gained considerable traction in the next two millennia; in one way or another, the philosophical investigation of happiness from Aristotle to Erasmus and on to Luther was concerned with the alignment of individual conduct and the heavenly order. McMahon explores the broad range of these ideas while pointing out the strong continuities among them. At the time the Beatitudes were written down, with their mysterious promise of blessing for the weak and the poor, "the emphasis is on the promise of future reward"; by the time of Luther, in the sixteenth century, "the experience of happiness on earth . . . was an outward sign of God's grace."

The next big turning point in the history of happiness came with the Enlightenment, and its vision of the world as a rational place, which might be governed by laws analogous to the newly discovered Newtonian laws of physics. In the words of the historian Roy Porter, the Enlightenment "translated the ultimate question 'How can I be saved?' into the pragmatic 'How can I be happy?' " With this came a new emphasis on the legitimate pursuit of pleasure. In classical and Christian thought, pleasure was seen as, at best, a distraction from the worthwhile pursuit of virtue. The Enlightenment gave pleasure much better press. "If pleasure exists, and we can only enjoy it in life, then life is happiness," argued Casanova, who was in a position to know.

This is the understanding of happiness with which the modern world begins; it is vividly captured in the second sentence of the Declaration of Independence, which asserts as self-evident a right to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." To non-Americans, talk of "the pursuit of happiness" can seem an amazing mixture of the simpleminded and the unexpectedly complex. What seems simple is that happiness is so straightforward that we all have a right—a right!—to seek it; what seems complex is the idea that what we're entitled to is, indeed, a pursuit, something strenuous and not necessarily successful. Some Marxists have thought that the right to pursue happiness was a last-minute substitution for a previously drafted right to property, but McMahon makes short work of that conspiracy theory. He points out that the Founding Fathers, who queried, crossed out, and haggled over every line of the Declaration, let the "pursuit of Happiness" stand unedited and unamended. But he also points out that the eighteenth-century understanding of "pursuit" was rather darker than it might seem now. Dr. Johnson's dictionary defined it as "the act of following with hostile intention," and McMahon adds that "if one thinks of pursuing happiness as one pursues a fugitive . . . the 'pursuit of happiness' takes on a somewhat different cast."

The legacy of that ambiguity is with us still. We are pursuing happiness to this day, and it is by no means clear that it is a happy process. The self-help section in any bookshop is easy to mock—indeed, it sometimes seems that the titles of self-help books are almost mocking themselves—but there is nothing to mock about the people standing in front of the shelves looking for guidance. In fact, the advice in self-help books is, by and large, pretty good. The





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trouble is that it is very difficult to take.

Why is this so? For the first time in human history, it's possible to give tentative answers that are based on a scientific account of mental processes. In addition to the old psych-lab tests, researchers now have access to technology such as MRI and PET scanners. These can report where brain activity takes place, and can begin to answer questions about why our minds work in the way that they do. One example has to do with emotion, which is regulated in part by the frontal cortex of the brain, the last part to expand as mammals evolved. The orbitofrontal cortex, just above and behind the eyes, is "one of the most consistently active areas of the brain during emotional reactions," Jonathan Haidt tells us. "The neurons in this part of the cortex fire wildly when there is an immediate possibility of pleasure or pain, loss or gain." People who suffer damage to the frontal cortex can lose most of their ability to experience emotion while retaining their ability to think rationally. But they don't therefore see the world with crystalline logic, so that life suddenly becomes simple. On the contrary, Haidt reports: "They find themselves unable to make simple decisions or set goals, and their lives fall apart. When they look out at the world and think, 'What should I do now?' they see dozens of choices but lack immediate internal feelings of like or dislike. They must examine the pros and cons of every choice with their reasoning, but in the absence of feeling they see little reason to pick one or the other."

Philosophers have expounded on happiness for a long time, but only relatively recently have psychologists taken much of an interest. The study of "positive psychology," as it is called, was launched by Martin Seligman, of the University of Pennsylvania, in the late nineteen-nineties, and began with the realization that the study of psychiatry had a huge bias toward every form of illness. "The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," the basic reference work of the psychiatric profession, was (and is) a chronicle of everything that could possibly go wrong with the human mind, from psychosis to schizoaffective disorder to mania—a harrowing catalogue. But where was the study of the mind when it was working satisfactorily? Where was the study of a healthy emotional life and successful adaptation to circumstances? In short, what had psychology to say about happiness? Haidt is a member of the positive-psychology school, and his book, which has in its packaging some of the trappings of self-help, is much more intelligent than it looks from the outside. One of the key questions—going straight to the heart of the Enlightenment ambition for us to be happy here and now, in this life—is whether happiness is a default setting of the brain. That is to say, are we, left to our own devices, and provided with sufficient food and freedom and control over our circumstances, naturally happy?

The answer proposed by positive psychology seems to be: It depends. The simplest kind of unhappiness is that caused by poverty. People living in poverty become happier if they become richer—but the effect of increased wealth cuts off at a surprisingly low figure. The British economist Richard Layard, in his stimulating book "Happiness: Lessons from a New Science," puts that figure at fifteen thousand dollars, and leaves little doubt that being richer does not make people happier. Americans are about twice as rich as they were in the nineteen-seventies but report not being any happier; the Japanese are six times as rich as they were in 1950 and aren't any happier, either. Looking at the data from all over the world, it is clear that, instead of getting happier as they become better off, people get stuck on a "hedonic treadmill": their expectations rise at the same pace as their incomes, and the happiness they seek remains constantly just out of reach.

According to positive psychologists, once we're out of poverty the most important determinant of happiness is our "set point," a natural level of happiness that is (and this is one of the movement's most controversial claims) largely inherited. We adapt to our circumstances; we don't, or can't, adapt our genes. The evidence for this set point, and the phrase itself, came from a study of identical twins by the behavioral geneticist David Lykken, which concluded that "trying to be happier is like trying to be taller." Contrary to everything you might think, "in the long run, it doesn't much matter what happens to you," Haidt writes. Consider the opposing examples of winning the lottery or of losing the use of your limbs. According to Haidt, "It's better to win the lottery than to break your neck, but not by as much as you'd think. . . . Within a year, lottery

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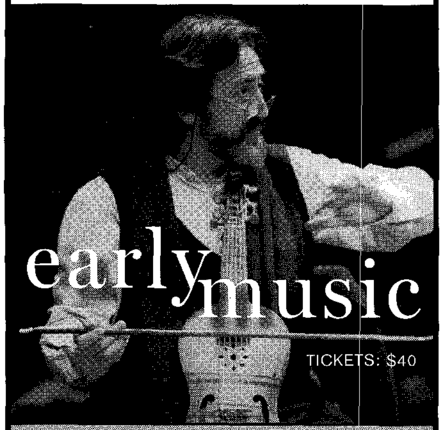

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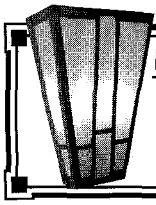

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winners and paraplegics have both (on average) returned most of the way to their baseline levels of happiness."

Can that possibly be true? Here we run into one of the biggest problems with the study of happiness, which is that it relies heavily on what people tell us about themselves. The paraplegics in these studies may well report regaining their previous levels of happiness, but how can we know whether these levels really are the same? You can compare relative happiness in the course of a given day, though that's not at all the same thing. Layard cites a study, by the Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman, reporting that people's top four favorite parts of the day feature sex, socializing after work, dinner, and relaxing. Their bottom four involve commuting, work, child care, and housework. But our absolute level of happiness is more elusive. Happiness "is something essentially subjective," Freud wrote. "No matter how much we may shrink with horror from certain situations—of a galley-slave in antiquity, of a peasant during the Thirty Years' War, of a victim of the Holy Inquisition, of a Jew awaiting a pogrom—it is nevertheless impossible for us to feel our way into such people. . . . It seems to me unprofitable to pursue this aspect of the problem any further."

That isn't, of course, the view taken by positive psychologists. Then again, the news that we're on a hedonic treadmill, so that we end up where we're always bound to end up, is so contrary to our fundamental appetites for exertion and the next new thing, that nobody can really accept it. So Lykken himself, the fellow who came up with the finding about the set point, went on to write a book about how to become happier. (It contained his favorite recipe for Key-lime pie.) Positive psychology has even devised a formula for how to be happy, where H is your level of happiness, S is your set point, C is the conditions of your life, and V is the voluntary activities you do. Ready for the secret of happiness? Here it is:

$$H=S+C+V$$

In other words, your happiness consists of how happy you naturally are, plus whatever is going on in your life to affect your happiness, plus a bit of voluntary work. Well, duh. The only vaguely surprising thing about this is how useful voluntary work can be to the person doing it—and even that isn't really news. At the end of the nineteenth century, Emile Durkheim performed a huge cross-cultural study of suicide, and found, in Haidt's words, that "no matter how he parsed the data, people who had fewer social constraints, bonds and obligations were more likely to kill themselves." The more connected we are to other people, the less likely we are to succumb to despair—a conclusion that isn't very distant from the common-sense proposition that lonely people are often unhappy, and unhappy people are often lonely.

The psychological study of happiness might seem to be something of a bust. Mainly it tells us things that people have known for a long time, except with scientific footnotes. In the end, the philosophy and the science converge on the fact that *thinking* about your own happiness does not make it any easier to be happy. A co-founder of positive psychology, Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi, made people carry a pager, and told them that every time it went off they should write down what they were doing and how much they were enjoying it. The idea was to avoid the memory's tendency to focus on peaks and troughs, and to capture the texture of people's lives as they were experiencing them, rather than in retrospect. The study showed that people were most content when they were experiencing what Csikzentmihalyi called "flow"—in Haidt's definition, "the state of total immersion in a task that is challenging yet closely matched to one's abilities." We are at our happiest when we are absorbed in what we are doing; the most useful way of regarding happiness is, to borrow a phrase of Clive James's, as "a by-product of absorption."

The trouble is that asking yourself about your frame of mind is a sure way to lose your flow. If you want to be happy, don't ever ask yourself if you are. A person in good health in a Western liberal democracy is, in terms of his objective circumstances, one of the most fortunate human beings ever to have walked the surface of the earth. Risk-taking Ig and worried Og both would have regarded our easy, long, riskless lives with incredulous envy. They would have regarded us as so lucky that questions about our state of mind wouldn't be worth asking. It is a perverse consequence of our fortunate condition that the question of our happiness, or lack of it, presses unhappily hard on us. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Kornwolf, *by Tristan Egolf (Black Cat; $14).* In the third novel by Egolf, who took his own life last year, a rough beast is slouching through the hills of rural Pennsylvania, with glowing eyes, a pompadour, and a strong resemblance to Richard Nixon. This is good news for Owen Brynmor, a reporter who has recently returned to his hated home town, which he recalls as a soulless place where public schooling was "a daily incentive to go on a shooting spree." He gleefully concocts a shaggy-werewolf story for the local paper, hoping to disrupt the peace, and little suspecting that the lycanthrope really does exist. By day, he's a mute Amish boy; by night, an avenging spirit out of German myth. Egolf's frantic novel reads as if it had been written all at once, in a white heat, and its coherence suffers accordingly. Still, the voice is unforgettable, at times attaining the incantatory power of Whitman's "barbaric yawp."

Slipping Into Darkness, *by Peter Blauner (Little, Brown; $24.95).* Francis X. Loughlin is an aging police detective haunted by a twenty-year-old homicide involving a young female doctor. A man named Julian Vega was put away for that crime, possibly without sufficient evidence, when he was seventeen. As Blauner's novel opens, Vega has just been released from prison, on a technicality, when Loughlin is called to investigate a crime that bears an uncomfortable resemblance to the earlier murder. Though the book sometimes takes the easy way out (the climactic twist feels both generic and arbitrary), it is elevated by Blauner's surefooted characterization of Julian. Newly free, struggling to find his way, dependent on the (somewhat tenuous) kindness of strangers, he is both sympathetic and tough; his portrait has a complexity that few authors could achieve.

A Godly Hero, *by Michael Kazin (Knopf; $30).* In American memory, the image of William Jennings Bryan, whom the Democrats nominated for President in 1896, 1900, and 1908, has been obscured by the pathetic, evolution-bashing Bible-thumper based on him in "Inherit the Wind." And yet from the "Cross of Gold" speech, which stunned the 1896 Convention, until his death, three decades later, Bryan was a hero to populists, an advocate of prohibition and women's suffrage, and a truer Wilsonian than Wilson, whom he served as Secretary of State. In this powerful, timely reëvaluation, Kazin argues that Bryan's faith-based liberalism reshaped the Democratic Party and made the New Deal possible. He manages to make even Bryan's attacks on evolution palatable, writing that his real target was social Darwinism (Scopes's textbook called for eliminating "feeble-mindedness" through eugenics). But Kazin refuses to redeem his subject entirely. "Bryan's passion for democracy," he writes, "always cooled at the color line."

The Colony, *by John Tayman (Scribner; $27.50).* Hawaii's isolation from foreign illness slowly disintegrated through the nineteenth century as trading ships arrived bearing the yellow flag of disease. When leprosy cases appeared, panicked local officials designated the island of Molokai, some fifty miles from Honolulu, a "leprosarium," because it was naturally inaccessible, presenting a sea cliff "so sheer that wild goats tumbled from its face." The first twelve lepers were rowed to its rocky shores in January of 1866. Drawing on eight thousand pages of documents, Tayman reconstructs a fascinating history of the settlement, which officially lasted until 1969. Shortages of food, water, and shelter sent some lepers into caves pocketed inside an extinct volcano. Tayman's multilayered account sketches in scientific details, such as the fact that later medical studies proved that most of the exiles weren't even contagious.

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MUSICAL EVENTS

PUCCINI REMIXED

A fresh approach to opera's crowd-pleaser.

BY ALEX ROSS

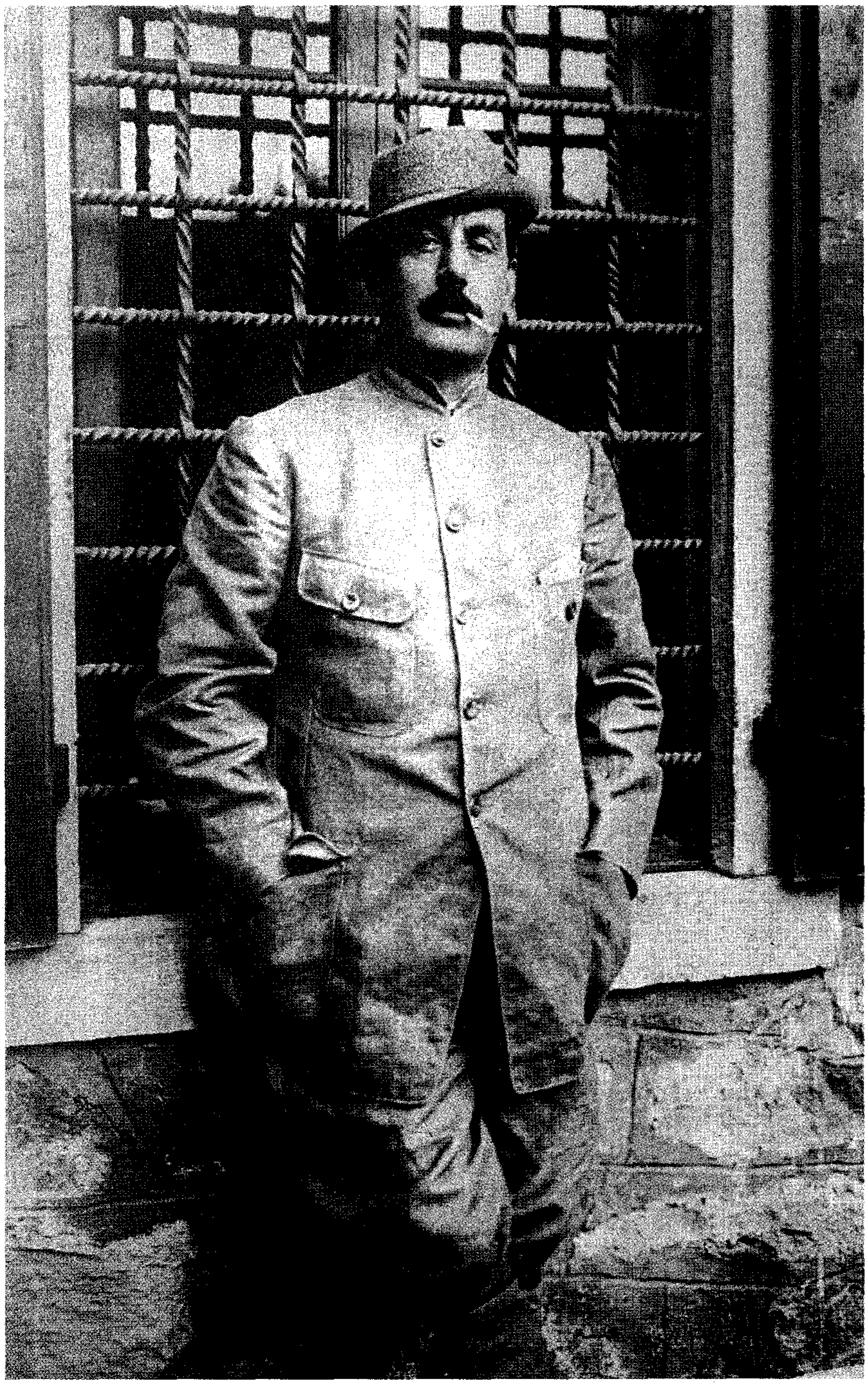
Concert life in New York has never been more vigorous than it is right now. Or so it seemed during a sustained delirium of musical events in late January and early February. The Berlin Philharmonic, under Simon Rattle, brought its dark-gold sound to Carnegie Hall, in four programs touching on four centuries; Mozart was celebrated on the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of his birth. Lincoln Center brought in John Eliot Gardiner to conduct Mozart Masses and symphonies, but it gave more attention to a not-at-all-dead composer, the impossibly vibrant Osvaldo Golijov, whose flamenco opera "Ainadamar" and pan-Iberian song cycle "Ayre" played to sold-out halls. The Juilliard School, in its annual Focus! Festival, presented six evenings of works written in 2005, including Donald Martino's Fifth String Quartet, a valedictory tour de force in high-modern style (the composer died in December), and Mason Bates's "Digital Loom," for organ and electronics, which transformed the hall into something between a decaying cathedral and an East Berlin club. At one point, determined not to be defeated by the surfeit, I made an early exit from a fabulously murderous twentieth-century program by James Levine and the Met Orchestra—Bartók's "Miraculous Mandarin," Schoenberg's "Erwartung," Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring"—to catch a program of Renaissance polyphony by the Hilliard Ensemble, in the Music Before 1800 series, at Corpus Christi Church. I don't recommend going from blood-spattered Austrian atonality to unyielding Franco-Flemish counterpoint by way of a hellbent cab ride.

All this was meticulously planned by concert programmers, whose job is to disappear behind the charisma of performers, but who deserve to be celebrated on occasion. Two people in particular are playing crucial roles in New York music: Jane Moss, who is the vice-president for programming at Lincoln Center, and Ara Guzelimian, who is the artistic adviser of Carnegie. Each has a distinctive approach, but their tastes overlap enough to suggest a consensus on what intelligent programming should look like in the early twenty-first century. Both Moss and Guzelimian routinely celebrate living composers. They favor festivals and thematic series—or, in Carnegie's parlance, "Perspectives"—so that a creative musician like Valery Gergiev or Ian Bostridge can offer a world view rather than a bunch of pieces. And they have embraced non-classical personalities: Carnegie has hosted Caetano Veloso and Youssou N'Dour, while Lincoln Center recently featured the remarkable indie-pop singer-songwriter Sufjan Stevens, whose stark religious song "Seven Swans" was strangely similar in psychic impact to the Nicolas Gombert Mass that Hilliard sang at Corpus Christi. The idea is not to dilute classical music with crossover novelties but to move it back into the thick of modern life. The old art will no longer hold itself aloof; instead, it will play a godfather role in the wider culture, able to assimilate anything new because it has assimilated everything in the past.

In the middle of this midwinter musical carnival, the Collegiate Chorale, a venerable New York institution now under the direction of Robert Bass, presented an all-Puccini program at Carnegie Hall. It wasn't an official Carnegie event; the chorus rented the hall, hiring the Orchestra of St. Luke's to provide accompaniments and the soprano Aprile Millo to supply diva ferocity. At first glance, the concept of a Puccini evening may seem less than fresh, given that the composer hardly lacks exposure in this town; "La Bohème" is, after all, the reigning box-office champion at the Metropolitan Opera, having received 1,178 performances since its local début, in 1900. ("We cannot believe that there is permanent success for an opera constructed as this one is," the *Times* opined.) But the Collegiate Chorale accomplished something with Puccini that no one this season has so far managed to do with Mozart: it succeeded in putting an ultra-familiar composer in a novel light.

Thoughtful programming reveals something about musical works simply by juxtaposing them. The Collegiate Chorale put together Puccini's first and last operatic thoughts: "Le Villi," a brief gothic melodrama about a faithless lover haunted by his dead beloved, which Puccini wrote in 1883, at the age of twenty-four; and Act III of "Turandot," the epic tale of an icy Chinese princess, which he was still working on at the time of his death, in 1924. "Le Villi" is hobbled by a rickety dénouement, but the first act is a wonder. It is pure Puccini, lush on the surface and economical in construction. Italianate lyricism, Wagnerian harmony, and French atmosphere merge as one. The orchestration is at once transparent and enveloping. Vocal lines evolve from a conversational monotone into electrifying lyric arcs. Franco Farina sang the male lead, while Millo was the maiden turned ghost, looking properly spooky in a black cape and Bono-style glasses; together they brought out the systematic ratcheting up of emotion and tension that defines Puccini's strongest ensemble writing. The feeling is of a creative voice materializing out of nowhere, as if by divine command—which, indeed, is how the usually levelheaded Puccini said that he was summoned to write opera.

"Turandot" shows the composer facing his greatest challenge—dramatizing a heroine who, in contrast to the magnificently earthy characters of "La Bohème" and "Tosca," is fundamentally inhuman. To convey Turandot's awesome coldness, Puccini uses what he has learned from the modernisms of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. He does not abandon his lyric gift, as billions who have hummed along to "Nessun dorma" can attest. The task of reconciling these extremes caused Puccini uncharacteristic agony. He died before he could write the finale, in which Turandot's heart finally melts, and was unsure how to illustrate her last-minute transformation



In "Turandot," Puccini's synthesis of old and new is almost avant-garde.

ART ARCHIVE/CULVER PICTURES

in musical terms. There is nothing in opera quite as heartbreaking as the preceding scene, which describes the death of the slave girl Liù, for the composer of heartbreak is dying, too; after a heavy-footed procession that echoes the "Spring Rounds" section of the "Rite of Spring," ethereal clouds of choral sound that glance ahead to Messiaen (the Collegiate Chorale had been waiting for this moment, and made the most of it), and a high piccolo note shining through a fogbank of E-flat-minor strings, the Voice is gone.

The quandary of the ending, for which Puccini left a pile of sketches, one of them containing the famous remark "Then 'Tristan,' " has bedevilled opera houses ever since Toscanini conducted the première, in 1926. Puccini's colleague Franco Alfano fashioned a conclusion that hurried past the central dramatic challenge into an orgy of crude triumphalism. The Collegiate Chorale elected to use a far subtler completion that was prepared, in 2001, by the late Luciano Berio, whose high-tech, avant-garde façade always concealed a nostalgia for Romanticism. Berio's effort is far more satisfying than Alfano's, not only because it is beautifully crafted but because it honors the fact of Puccini's death; the new material begins with a shivery sequence of polytonal chords, suggesting a spirit gliding away, while also recalling the harsh sonorities with which the opera began. This version ought to replace Alfano's at the Met and elsewhere. Still, there is no mistaking the loss of power that happens when Berio takes Puccini's place.

There are amazingly few books about this most beloved of opera composers. The newest is William Berger's "Puccini Without Excuses" (Vintage), which provides an easygoing introduction to the operas and also feistily defends them against the perennial sneers of intellectuals. Berger points out that Puccini, despite his popularity, creates discomfort in this hyper-stylized, ironic age, because he deals in direct emotion, avoids ideology and moralism, and often favors characters "of no major consequence," except insofar as they mirror the audience. Puccini confounds opera directors who have no interest in ordinary people; he almost affronts the cool professionalism of the average young opera singer. Millo is valuable because she has no fear of raw emotion; she is not afraid to try the potentially ridiculous gesture that ends up making one's hair stand on end. Singing Turandot with the Collegiate Chorale, she communicated everything with a tentative, wondering enunciation of the word "amore."

Even composers may have something to learn from Puccini. "Turandot" becomes a different piece when it is removed from the colossal clutter of Franco Zeffirelli's production at the Met; it begins to sound nearly avant-garde, because it assimilates an array of modern sounds while maintaining an inexorable singing line. Berio also superimposed old and new, but the pieces in his collages remain alienated from one another. Many young composers still play the same glass-bead game with the past, upholding artificial differences in musical language rather than questioning them. Puccini might say: Don't make it new. Make it whole. ♦

THE SKY LINE

WHEN IN ROME

A striking redesign of the Getty's Malibu villa.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

In the nineteen-seventies, the Getty Museum built itself a home in Malibu, California, in the form of an imitation Roman villa from the first century. There was something undeniably kitschy about the notion of putting a make-believe classical villa atop a hillside overlooking the Pacific Ocean and calling it a museum, but nobody seemed to mind. This was Los Angeles, after all, and so what if the overdecorated galleries, with their damask wall coverings and trompe-l'oeil murals, gave the museum's interior the feeling of a mogul's mansion in Bel Air? Then the Getty grew up. In 1976, its eccentric founder, the oilman J. Paul Getty, died, leaving the bulk of his multibillion-dollar estate to the museum, which suddenly became the world's richest cultural institution. The museum morphed into the Getty Trust and spent a billion dollars constructing the Getty Center, a pristine modernist campus by Richard Meier, on top of a steep hill in Brentwood, thirteen miles east of Malibu.

The trust was obviously eager to leave behind its arriviste beginnings, and the villa could easily have become the most upscale condo conversion in Los Angeles history. Instead, the Getty came up with a more imaginative, and more costly, idea: it decided to give its strange building a chance to be taken seriously. The trust announced that it would turn the Malibu villa into a museum of antiquities, filling it with objects that were created in the period that the building—a replica of the Villa dei Papiri, in Herculaneum—was intended to evoke. It was a risky move, since it wasn't clear if this approach would make the building look more dignified or even sillier.

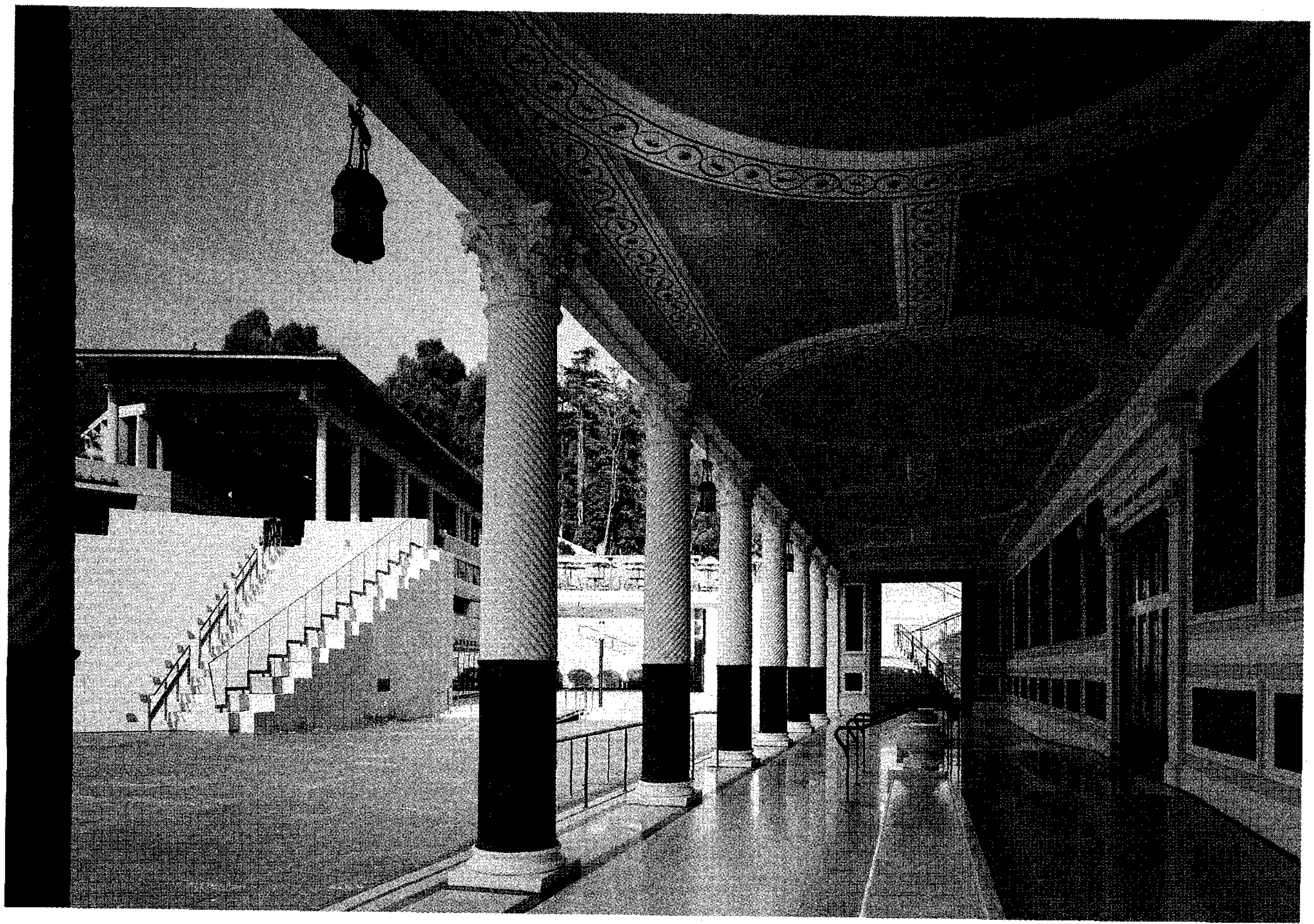
It took a dozen years and two hundred and seventy-five million dollars to renovate the villa and surround it with a series of modernist buildings, including an entry pavilion, an amphitheatre, a parking garage, a café, an auditorium, an education center, and a shop. The project's architects are Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti, of Boston, rigorous modernists who have a love of classicism and believe that an architect best respects history not by imitating it but by teasing its spirit into new forms. Machado and Silvetti are about as far as you can get from Norman Neuerburg, who designed the original villa, and it seemed an odd match: there is nothing overtly charming about Machado and Silvetti's work, while Neuerburg's design was a vast, sprawling exercise in cuteness.

The campus that Machado and Silvetti have created is a bracing collage of old and new, and the villa has been nearly magically transformed. The task was surely made easier by the fact that the French furniture and Old Master paintings are gone from the villa, and its new contents have a genuine connection to ancient Rome. (In fact, some items in the collection may *belong* to Rome; the Getty has been accused of acquiring a significant number of looted artifacts.) But it takes more than hauling away some gilded frames to make a ponderous building into a gracious one. Instead of slavishly replicating Roman architecture (although various touches, such as new floors of bronze, mosaic, and marble, reveal a high level of scholarship), Machado and Silvetti have acknowledged the past without imitating it. They have boldly reorganized the villa, creating more logical routes through it and adding fifty-eight windows and three skylights, to bring natural light into the galleries. One of the best things in the villa now is a new main stair, of bronze, glass, and hand-carved Spanish stone; a meticulous modernist composition, it is broad, sumptuous, and serene, and a crisp counterpoint to the classical-looking environment around it. The effect is playful and knowing: in Italy, contemporary alterations to ancient Roman structures are often made in such a bluntly modern style, to make clear which elements are authentically old. Here, of course, the "original" details date from 1974.

By treating the barely old as a revered object, Machado and Silvetti somehow make visitors feel that this building is no longer an object of ridicule but, rather, worthy of respect. It is an understated, sly maneuver, and they do it without taking the easy path of irony. Machado and Silvetti have recast the villa not only through their upgrades but in the way they have surrounded it with a series of new structures, changing its context. The villa is no longer its own little theme park: it is now an architectural folly in the center of a carefully conceived, impeccably wrought modern campus. In the English landscape tradition, the folly was not a trivial object but a noble act of historical connoisseurship, playing off against a great manor house that was designed in a more contemporary style. Machado and Silvetti have saved the once outlandish villa by connecting it to this honorable architectural heritage.

The ring of modernist structures doesn't intrude on the villa, nor do the buildings form a neutral backdrop. They are the architectural equivalent of cupped hands, holding the original structure within a firm, protective grasp. In this scheme, the new buildings—mainly horizontal structures, some of which are set into the side of the canyon—are gateways that deliver you to the old. You start with Machado and Silvetti's monumental entry pavilion, and then zigzag up a series of staircases, through a carefully choreographed sequence of modernist areas, until you reach the amphitheatre, where the space finally opens up. Only then does the renovated, painted concrete villa come into view—brilliant in ivory and white, with a glistening red tile roof.

The façades of Machado and Silvetti's new buildings contain a few portions of travertine, a warm and handsome stone that here serves as a deft



No longer a theme park, the villa is now an architectural folly amid an impeccable modern campus. Photograph by Robert Polidori.

allusion to the dominant material on Meier's Getty Center campus. But the new buildings are clad mostly with striated concrete, a more provocative material that is at once harsh and delicate. Here, it is sometimes layered with marble, bronze, wood, and other forms of concrete, to create what the architects call a "strata wall." The details are exceptionally refined—the retaining walls around the entry pavilion are capped by floating panels of translucent onyx, for example—and there are lots of climbing vines, lest anyone get the idea that these architects were trying to surround the villa with the rough and austere Brutalism that was fashionable in the nineteen-seventies. (Using the modernism of the villa's own period would have been a nasty, if clever, joke.)

Machado and Silvetti seem determined to show that modernism can have texture, richness, sensuality, and scale. Their architecture recalls that of the great Italian modernist Carlo Scarpa—like Scarpa, Machado and Silvetti can slip a sheet of glass or a crisp bronze rail into a stone façade, and make it seem not a coy juxtaposition of different periods but a real engagement of the modern with the Classical, so that architectural styles separated by two thousand years appear to have something to say to each other.

One of the new sections, a tall structure containing the café and the museum store, has a large outdoor colonnade. Little slabs of onyx are set atop each column, forming modernist versions of capitals. The arrangement of the onyx layers varies with each column, and the effect is of piles of books stacked at random atop cylinders. A beautiful flourish, it's as subtle, and as gently witty, a comment on the dialectic between modernism and Classicism as I've ever seen.

Elevating an object of architectural derision into something serious is no small achievement. This act seems particularly noteworthy in Southern California, where the line between good and bad taste has often been blurred beyond recognition, and the experience of being in public space often consists not of strolling along a city street but of parking your car and entering some kind of artificial environment. At the Getty villa, you still park your car and enter a fantasy world, but it's no longer a glib one: it's sincere, cerebral, and elegant. By adding modern buildings, Machado and Silvetti haven't made the Getty's Roman villa any less a part of Southern California, and they haven't made it any less entertaining. They have given it the one thing it always lacked: a proper sense of history. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Milford (Mass.) Country Gazette.

A Maple Street man called police on Saturday, Dec. 18 about 4:30 p.m. to report that an unknown woman was sleeping in his bed, according to police. After checking his bed again he told police he believed it was his mother, then stated he wasn't sure. Police went to the house where the man finally definitively identified the woman as his mother.

THE THEATRE

THRILLERS AND KILLERS

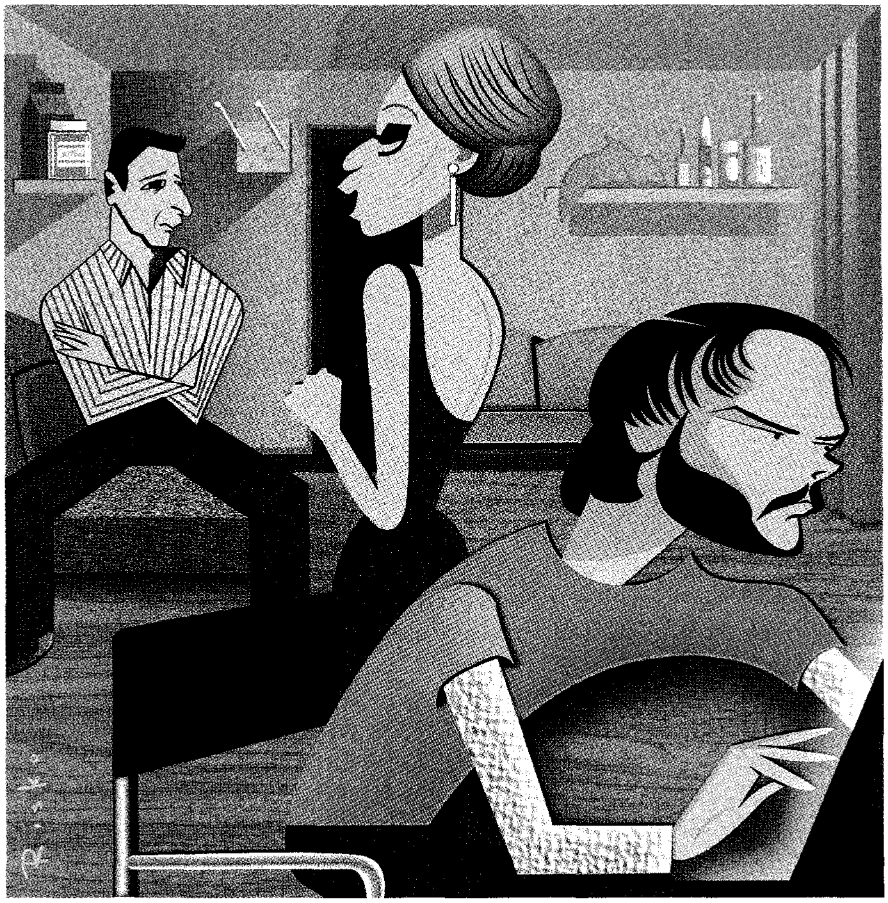
Adam Rapp on passion and perversity.

BY JOHN LAHR

"All charming people have something to conceal, usually their total dependence on the appreciation of others," Cyril Connolly wrote in "Enemies of Promise." Take, for instance, the sensational charmer Davis, who is the hypotenuse of the complex and compelling love triangle in Adam Rapp's "Red Light Winter" (a Steppenwolf production at the Barrow Street). We first see Davis (played with wicked bravado by Gary Wilmes) as he whirls into the squalid room at an Amsterdam hostel that he is sharing with his former college roommate, a bearded, insecure playwright named Matt (the superb, edgy Christopher Denham). Davis is a tour de force of liveliness; he feeds off the deadness in others, which goes some way toward explaining his allegiance to his depressed and inept friend, who, when Davis enters, has just attempted to hang himself from a coat peg with his shoelace. ("You're missing all the fun, bro. This place is a trip" are Davis's first words to his roommate.) Davis, who is a wunderkind of the publishing world back in New York, fancies himself an agent of delight. He is as pathologically confident as Matt is pathologically shy; he generates life, but at an emotional price to those who capitulate to his infectious energy.

It's easy to understand Davis's appeal to Matt: he embodies the wildness, the appetite, the sense of maverick liberation that Matt yearns for—and raves about in Henry Miller's writing. "Miller was a genius. Carver was all craft and no substance," Matt lectures, provoked into a rare moment of eloquence by his disdain for Raymond Carver's "little tales of suburban paralysis." Davis is Matt's antidote to paralysis; he brings the solitary writer into the world and promises him a vicarious kind of ecstasy. In return, the passive Matt offers Davis an emptiness that he can fill, an opportunity to excite and satisfy his overweening sense of his own omnipotence. It's a mysterious but riveting parasitic relationship.

Rapp, who also directed this production, stages as cleverly as he writes; he immerses us first in the sour torpor of Matt's solitude—as the members of the audience take their seats, Matt is hunched alternately on his bed and at his laptop—then in the seductive exhilaration of Davis's entrance. Davis claims the room with the same irresistible prowess with which he will finally claim Matt's psyche. "Red Light Winter," which chronicles a double unrequited love, is a demonstration of psychological imperialism that is at once thrilling and killing.



Gary Wilmes, Lisa Joyce, and Christopher Denham in "Red Light Winter."

ROBERT RISKO

Rapp, in his introduction to the published play, refers to Davis as a "sexual carnivore . . . a collector of seduction anecdotes." In the opening scene, after a few minutes of buddy badinage, Davis stops mid-thought and goes to the door to beckon inside the doe-eyed Christina (Lisa Joyce, making an effective New York début), a soi-disant French singer who turns out to be a "window whore" and an American, whom Davis has picked up in his troll through the red-light district. Christina, we learn, is part of a prearranged plan to get the earnest, sex-starved Matt laid. (Matt's only significant girlfriend since college, he later reveals, fell for and is now "sort of, like, engaged" to Davis.) She is a languid, soft-spoken object of desire; in her pliancy, she exudes a sense of lostness. Her big, kohl-lined eyes sparkle at Davis's brazen high jinks. "Excuse-moi, ich muss gehen to der herde harde herde faire pipi," he says, as he exits to the bathroom. Soon, however, his wit takes a swift and perplexingly cruel turn. "Come on, nerd, brag a little," he says to Matt in front of Christina, calling him a "burgeoning" playwright and explaining that "he hasn't had a single production, bless his heart." "*Emerging*, not fucking *burgeoning*," Matt defends himself lamely.

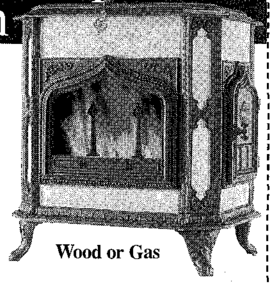
What at first glance appeared to be a study of friendship turns, by degrees, into an exploration of passion and the perverse. Davis presents Christina to Matt in much the way a cat would lay a near-dead mouse at the foot of its owner: as at once a temptation and a triumph. Throughout the scene, he nudges Matt ever closer to his trophy. "You're thirty years old and you're gonna fucking do this," Davis tells Matt, who sobs in terror when Christina steps out of the room. "By the way, she shaves her pussy," he adds. "Clean as a car seat." Davis claims only to have felt her up. "I sort of wanted her to be—I don't know—*fresh* for you or something," he says later. "I was sort of preparing to give her to you. So in some weird way it was like *you* were teabagging my nuts." Davis is predatory. To get the full piquancy of conquest, he needs both to win the allegiance of his prey and to betray that trust. His embrace is a kind of theft, and his apparent generosity yields a sadistic pleasure. Christina may give her body to Matt, but Davis has already taken her heart. As Davis is about to leave Christina with Matt, she calls him back. "I was wondering if I could have your address in New York," she says. "Why?" he asks. "Are you gonna, like, invoice me for add-ons?" The address he gives her, we soon learn, is not his but Matt's East Village walkup. At a stroke, the seduction and the annihilation are accomplished. It's no wonder that Christina feels, as she says, humiliated.

When Christina arrives in the East Village a year later, looking for Davis, she finds Matt, whom, at first, she doesn't remember. Matt, however, has held on to every memory of her—he's writing a play about their time in Amsterdam; he even has the red dress she was wearing when he met her. (In Amsterdam, in the dress, she sings one of her songs for both men: "It's the pearl that I long for, the pearl that I long for, the pearl that I long to hold near." "That fucking rocked!" Davis says, slyly mocking her. The lovelorn Matt understands that the song is about unrequited love; he hears Christina so well that he correctly guesses her American origins.) Matt declares his passion. "You were, like, *kind*," he says. "It helped me so much, Christina. In ways that I'd need, like, the twelve thousand semitones of dolphin language to articulate." And he confesses that he often sleeps with—or even in—her dress. ("I wanted to feel what it was like to be inside you again," he says. "It was like we were holding each other.") Christina confesses that she has AIDS. To Matt, the only thing that matters is that she's in his apartment and willing to accept his help.

Davis calls in search of a cell phone that he has left at Matt's place. Matt tries to stonewall him, but when he goes out for groceries the wolf comes knocking at the door. Davis, enemy of all boundaries, inspects Matt's desk, reads a bit of the play Matt is writing about Amsterdam, types some additions, and erases a few lines. Then he turns on Christina and proceeds to erase her memories and her adoring impression of him. "You're an idiot," he tells her. "You think you know me . . . because I stuck my finger up your ass while I fucked you like the whore you are?" "We made love," Christina says, insisting on his goodness. The ensuing violent, sexual scene—"It might be the best and the worst thing they've ever felt," the stage directions read—escalates into a powerful dance of death.

Rapp, who has directed two films based on his work, is a gifted storyteller. He makes demands on his audience, and he rewards its close attention with depth and elegance. He has a generous talent. In "Red Light Winter," he brings memorable news about the heart, telling us both how it fools itself and how it kills itself.

The heart—or Broadway's cardboard version of that easily bruised muscle—is given a tiresome workout in the first New York revival of Neil Simon's 1963 play "Barefoot in the Park" (directed by Scott Elliott, at the Cort). The expertise of Simon's joke-writing is indubitable; the patriarchal attitudes beneath the romantic palaver here are insufferable. At one point, the young newlywed bride (Amanda Peet) accuses her lawyer husband (Patrick Wilson) of being a "watcher," not a "doer." "Well," he answers, "it was harder to watch what you did than it was for you to *do* what I was watching." To which I can add only, "Amen." ♦



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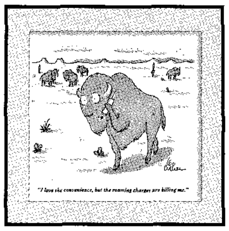

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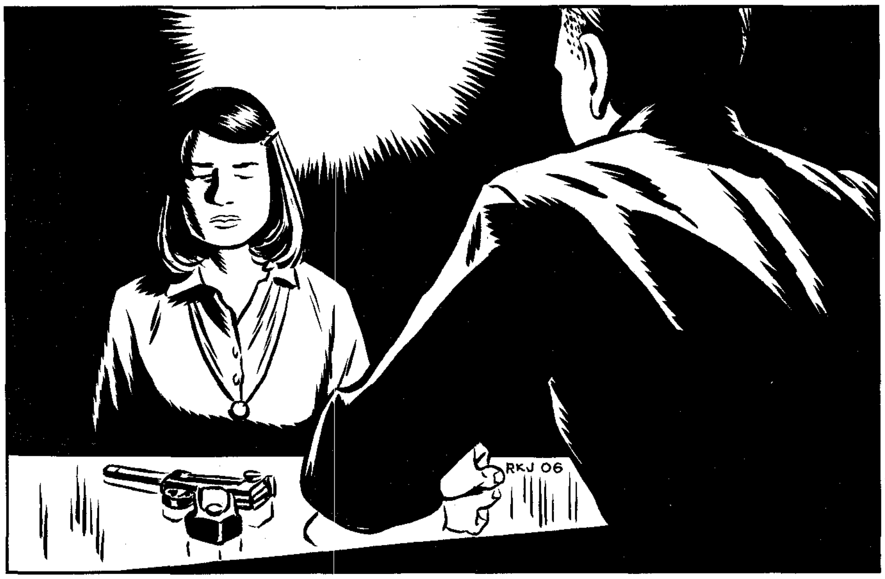
THE CURRENT CINEMA

EVIL TOUCH

"Sophie Scholl: The Final Days" and "Night Watch."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The new German movie "Sophie Scholl: The Final Days" is as plain as its title. The film follows the last six days in the life of Scholl (Julia Jentsch), who, with her brother, Hans (Fabian Hinrichs), and a friend, Christoph Probst (Florian Stetter), was executed by the Nazis in 1943. All three were members of the White Rose, a student resistance movement at Munich University. Sophie went there in May of 1942 to study biology and philosophy; Hans, a medical student, had enrolled in 1939. Both were ardent Christians. Early in the film, they take a suitcase of leaflets protesting Hitler's regime and the prolongation of the war to the Munich campus and leave them outside the lecture halls, to be picked up by students. One pile sits on a high balustrade; without warning, Sophie sweeps it into the air, so that the words of the White Rose sail down through the stairwell like snow.



Julia Jentsch as Sophie Scholl, a student who protested against the Nazi regime.

That is almost the only moment of wildness in Marc Rothemund's film. The rest of it is unadorned, controlled, and workaday. There are no gunfights, no whippings or bone-breaks (none that we see firsthand, at any rate), and, from Sophie, little more than a single howl of distress. We hear sporadic, thriller-like thuds of music, but the bulk of the film pursues a steady beat. Sophie is arrested, driven to Gestapo headquarters, and interrogated, over three days, by an investigator named Robert Mohr (Alexander Held). At first, she denies all charges. Then, faced with a confession extracted from Hans, she owns up. Mohr offers her a chance to save her neck by renouncing her ideals, but she refuses. She is put on trial, and, after a short travesty of justice, she meets her end. The nature of that end so clearly indicates a regime that thinks of murder as a mechanism that I will not name it here; see her death for yourself, and get the shock of your life.

Until recently, "Sophie Scholl" could not have been made in this form. Only under German reunification were the relevant Gestapo files discovered and made public, and the exchanges between Mohr and Sophie adhere as closely as possible to the official records of her interrogation. These scenes are the core of the movie, and, as is so often the case, the more mundane aspects are the most compelling; the skill with which our heroine builds her alibi, speaking confidently of lunch dates and laundry deliveries (hence, she says, the need for a suitcase), has a wire-tight suspense of its own. Mohr is an expert listener, like a piano teacher waiting for his star pupil to fluff a note. He is dressed not in uniform but in a gray suit, with a small swastika pinned to his lapel, and when he boasts that, without National Socialism, "I'd still be a country policeman," you think, Yes, that is what totalitarianism requires: a million Mohrs, suddenly seeing their chance. As the days grind by, a drooping dullness in his eyes confirms what we always suspected—that Mohr was dead long before he met Sophie Scholl. He can wheedle and hector, but he cannot break the half smile that hovers in her features, and Sophie, even after she confesses, seems to retain some buried secret that Mohr can never unearth.

To us, it is an open secret: the need for freedom of expression and the rule of law. Sophie knows she is right, and somehow Julia Jentsch conveys that knowledge without stiffening into a prig. I have heard viewers complain that the film overplays its hand, sliding first into a cartoon of saintliness, in the case of Sophie, and then into a cartoon of malice, in the case of Roland Freisler (Andre Hennicke), the judge who condemned her to death. Such a complaint says more about us than it does about the movie. We may simply have forgotten that, in the wake of circumstances that we can no longer envisage in our own lives, a few people might well surprise themselves with the vigor of their moral response. As for Freisler, you would be right to say that Hennicke's performance consists of "raging, screaming, howling to the point where his voice broke, leaping up explosively again and again." Those, however, are the words of Leo Samberger, an eyewitness at the trial; and by all accounts Freisler was indeed a figure of choleric excess. We may be so consoled by the villains served up on network crime shows, with their soluble sins and their garnish of comedy, that the real, brute thing is bound to disappoint. Freisler is not complex, or leavened with irony; he is a bore. But he existed, and the eagerness with which he dispatched good people to their deaths means that

R. KIKUO JOHNSON

he should be dishonored forever. His widow, Anna, incidentally, continued to receive a German state pension, which, in 1974, was raised on the ground that had her husband survived he would by then have been employed as an attorney or a high-ranking official of the state.

"Sophie Scholl" is not a great film, but then, in its sober reliance on documentary accuracy, it faces overwhelming competition. Robert Bresson's "The Trial of Joan of Arc" and "A Man Escaped," say, attain a kind of hallucinated momentum that Rothemund cannot match. Yet the movie works, for the simple reason that, behind the talk-heavy flatness of its action and the stubborn demeanor of its heroine, it hoards a violence of feeling. Although we are accustomed to violent acts onscreen, the emotions that they breed tend to be drab and dispensable; how many violent films, since "The Deer Hunter," have left you genuinely pained and spent? In "Sophie Scholl," on the other hand, even casual movements are unsettling. You watch Sophie saying a brief farewell to her parents, unable to embrace properly over the table that divides them, and you want to drag the table away. You stare at the college janitor who rats on Sophie and Hans—picking up incriminating scraps of paper, falling over himself to please the Gestapo—and you feel sick with loathing. "Sophie Scholl: The Final Days" may sound like a history lesson, but don't be fooled. It's a horror film.

There are two ways to see Timur Bekmambetov's "Night Watch," which was a big hit in its native Russia. One is to buy a ticket and spend a couple of breakneck hours watching vampires, shape-shifters, red-eyed fiends, and other hardworking members of the community slug it out for the soul of mankind on the dirty streets of Moscow. The other is to sit at your computer, log on to the official Web site, and watch the entire movie in two and a half minutes. I must say that, having tried both versions, I couldn't tell the difference. Countless films would be vastly improved by being cranked at ten times the speed—"Gandhi," "Caligula," "Scent of a Woman," and so on—but "Night Watch" isn't one of them.

Fox Searchlight Pictures is lending plenty of muscle to this movie, targeting viewers whose pursuit of pleasure has not, until now, included Russian cinema. Some of that enthusiasm has paid off; the subtitles, for instance, are the best I have encountered. Far from palely loitering at the foot of the screen, they lurk in odd corners of the frame and, at one point, glow scarlet and then spool away, like blood in water. I trust that this will start a technical trend and that, from here on, no respectable French actress will dream of removing her clothes unless at least three lines of dialogue can be made to unwind across her midriff.

We start a millennium ago, with a standoff between armies of Others—gifted spirits who stalk the world, unsuspected by mere mortals. There are two brands of Other, Light and Dark, thus proving Forrest Gump's closely argued theory that life is like a box of chocolates. A change of scene brings us to modern Moscow, where Anton (Konstantin Khabensky) learns that he is not just an Other but a Seer, who can spot other Others across a crowded room. One day, in the subway, he spies a woman whom he suspects of being not just any old Other but the Virgin, the slight giveaway being the throbbing vortex of cosmic energy funnelling into her head. What is more, the Light Others have a squad of vigilantes—the Night Watch—who keep an eye out for rogue Darks, while the Darks have a corresponding team, the Day Watch, on the trail of the Lights. Audiences are reminded to pick up their free Tylenol at the exits.

"Day Watch," the sequel, is already out in Moscow. Beyond that lies a third episode, although whether the title will be "Lunchtime Watch" has yet to be confirmed. All you need to know is that, with its somersaulting trucks, drafts of quaffable blood, and skies full of digitized ravens, Bekmambetov's movie has every intention of whacking "The Matrix" at its own game. I was much taken by the owl that turns into a naked woman (presumably the sort of thing that Harry Potter thinks about under the bedclothes) and by the kindly, white-haired gentleman who reaches behind his neck, removes his own spine, and uses it as a broadsword. And yet, for all the claptrap and the twitchy editing, "Night Watch" has something that its American cousins lack. What will faze a young viewer raised on George Lucas, say, is the sense of crud—a blanket of shabbiness and shadow beneath which the characters, Other and otherwise, measure out their lives in avenues and apartments not so far from the battered world of Gogol. The battle between good and evil, in its messy desperation, feels not like a comic-strip confection, as in "X-Men," but like the foul-tasting hangover of something true. ♦

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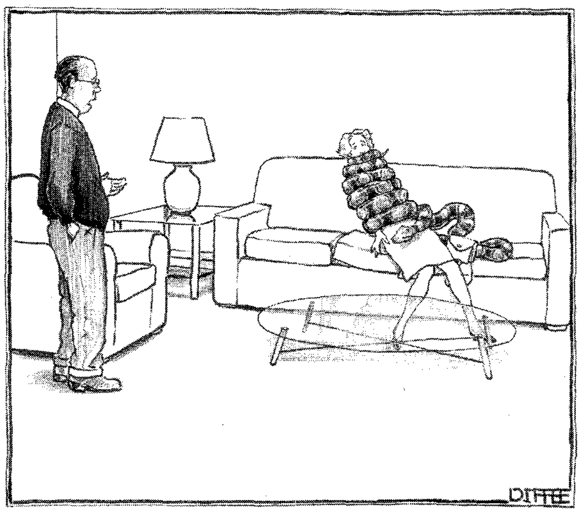
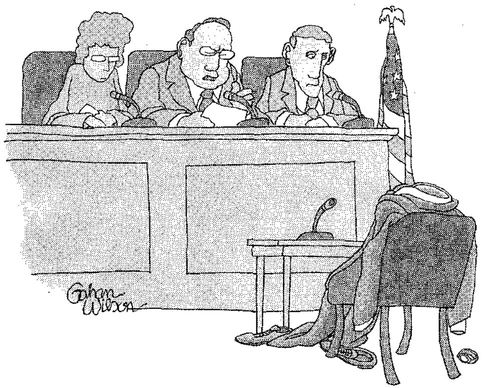
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Leo Cullum, must be received by Sunday, February 26th. Finalists in the February 6th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the March 13th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"To be fair, Martha, you started it."
Brian Diamond, Los Angeles, Calif.



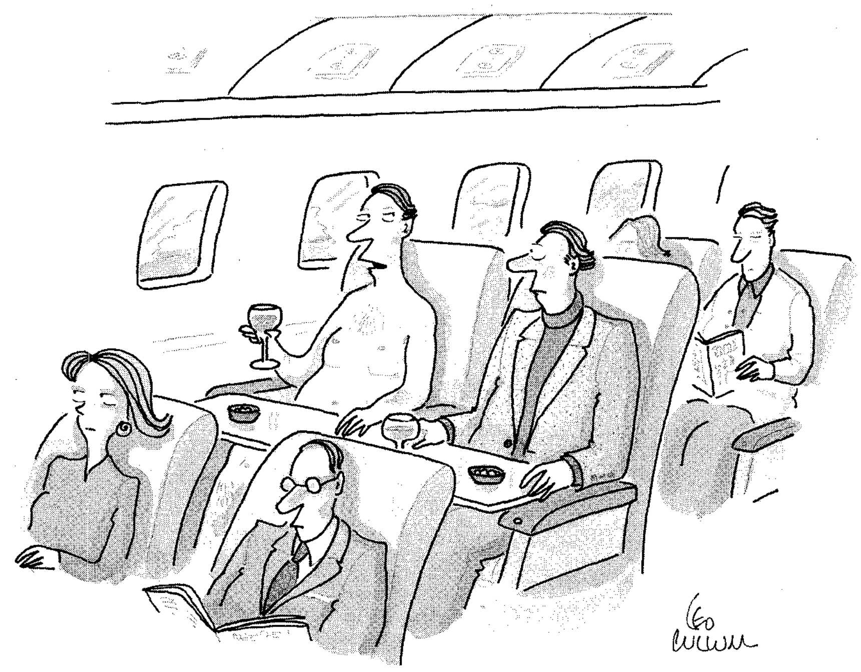
THE FINALISTS

"Are you now, or have you ever been?"
Stuart Spitalnic, Saunderstown, R.I.

"He won't get far."
Jay Christianson, Laguna Beach, Calif.

"The committee will ask you one final time: do you come in a 42?"
Alex Segal, Brooklyn, N.Y.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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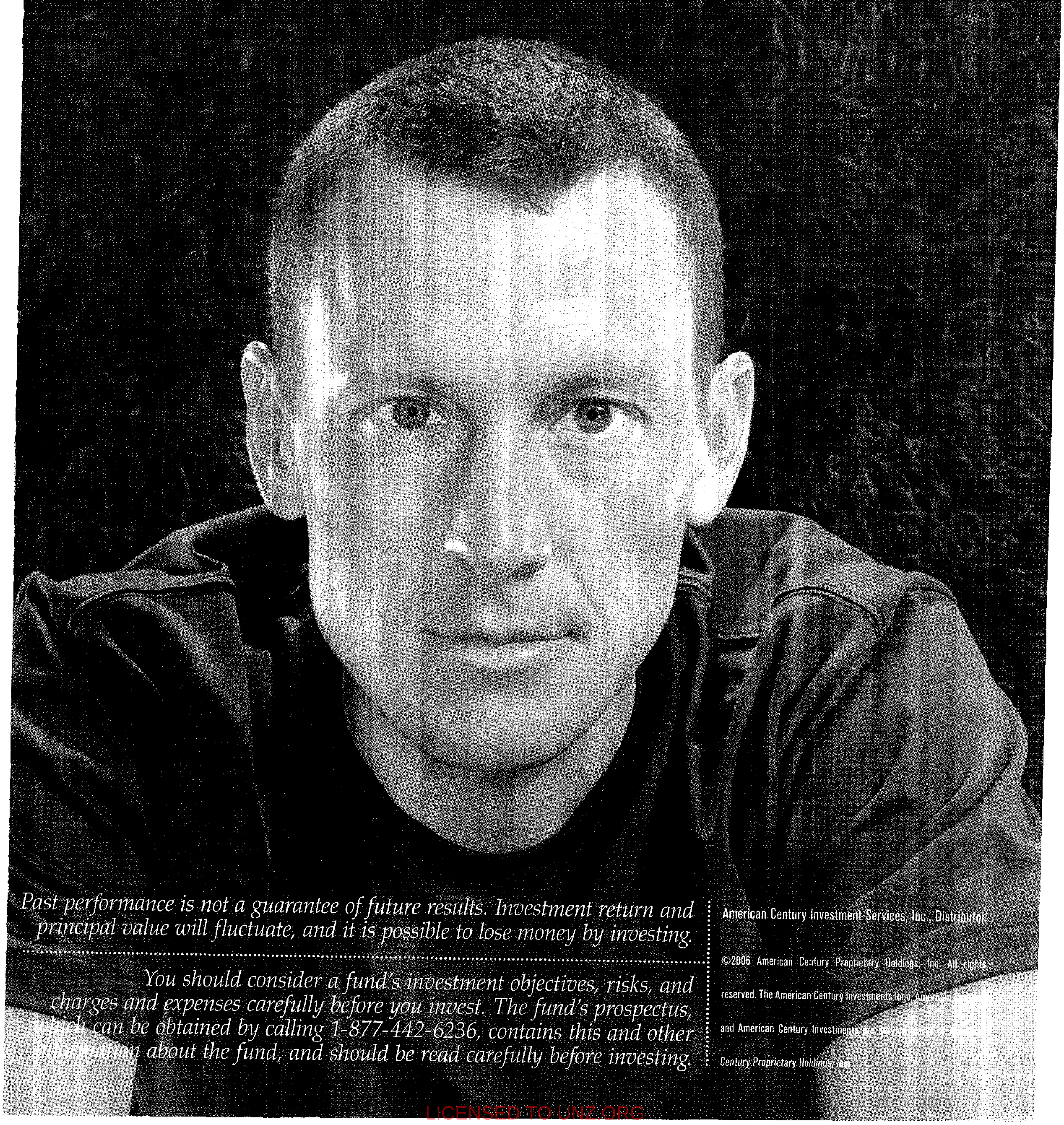

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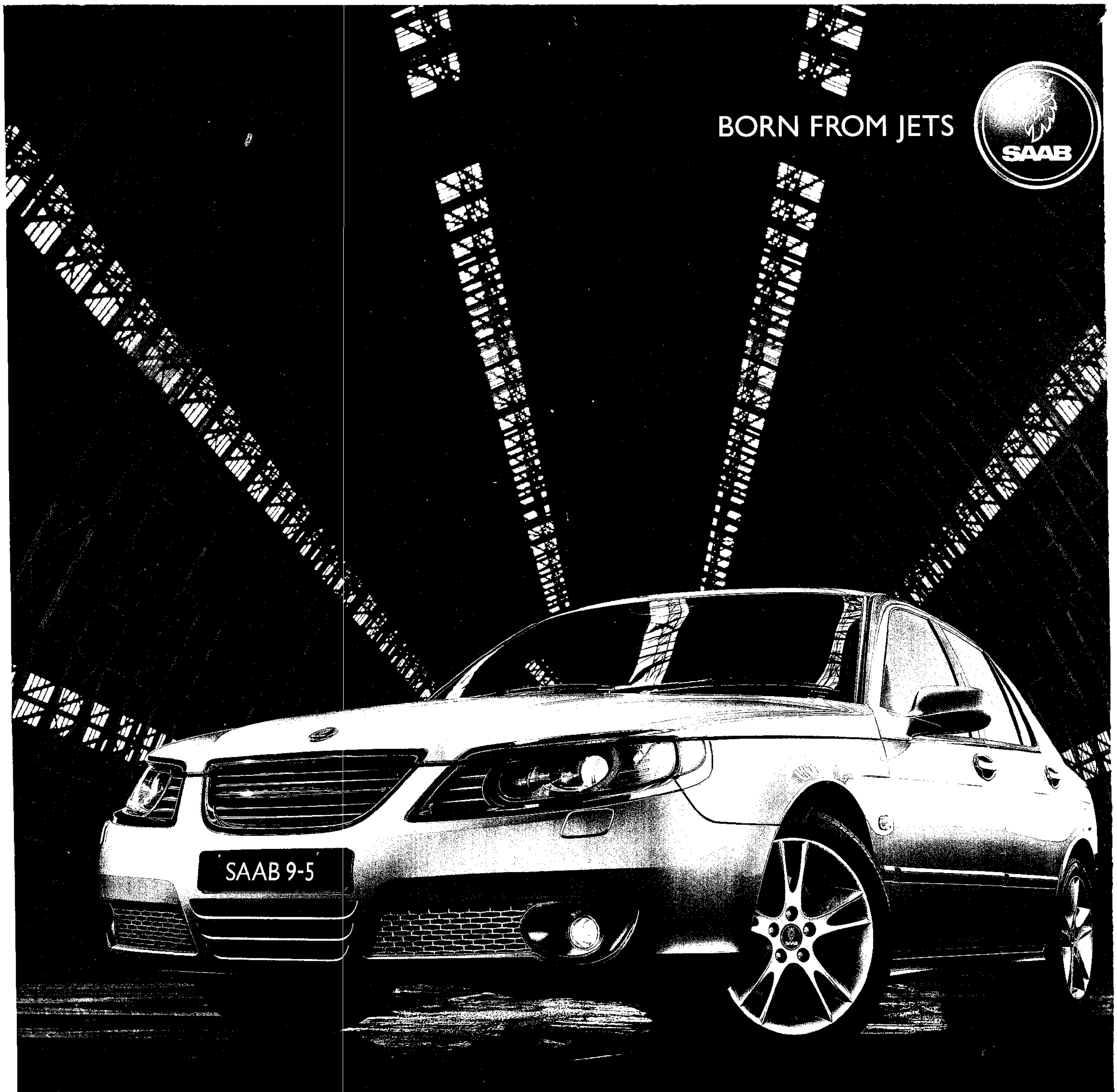

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